DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 076 CE 070 691

AUTHOR	Hirsh, Wendy; And Others
TITLE	Beyond the Career Break. A Study of Professional and Managerial Women Returning to Work after Having a Child.
INSTITUTION	Sussex Univ., Brighton (England). Inst. of Manpower Studies.
REPORT NO	ISBN-1-85184-146-6
PUB DATE	Oct 92
NOTE	164p.
AVAILABLE FROM	BEBC Distribution, 15 Albion Close, Parkstone, Poole BH12 3LL, England, United Kingdom (24 British pounds).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Attitudes; Adults; Dual Career Family; Employed Parents; *Employed Women; *Employee Attitudes; Employer Attitudes; Employment; *Employment Patterns; *Family Work Relationship; Flexible Working Hours; Foreign Countries; *Mothers; *Reentry Workers
IDENTIFIERS	Great Britain

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted of women managers and professionals in Britain who had taken a "career break"--from a few weeks to many years--to have a baby. The study sought to examine the decision to return to work after having a child, and whether the practical management of breaks could be improved; to discover the career patterns of women returning from a break in the period since their return; and to look at how returners feel about combining work and family life and what practical issues are of most concern to them. The results of the study were based on questionnaires completed in the summer of 1991 by 785 women (of 1,651 surveyed) who were working for 45 different employers. Some of the results of the study were as follows: (1) most of the women had taken only one break, at about age 30, and most had returned to full-time employment, although a significant percentage had worked part time at some time or were doing so at the time of the survey: (2) the women were mildly positive about most aspects of their breaks; (3) childcare concerns and the desire for time off when childcare arrangements break down were the most frequent concerns of the women; (4) one-third of the women had been promoted since returning to work; (5) most of the women wanted flexible hours and many had such arrangements; many also wanted to work part time but would not do so because of perceived damage to their careers; (6) the respondents were generally positive about access to training and development, did not feel isolated, and thought attitudes toward working mothers were improving; and (7) the stress of combining work with family life emerged as the most negative aspect of their experience. (The document includes 42 appendixes that contain the questionnaire and analyses of study data. The report contains 18 references.) (KC)

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Institute of Manpower Studies

Beyond the Career Break

A study of professional and managerial women returning to work after having a child

IMS Report No 223

Wendy Hirsh
Sue Hayday
Jill Yeates
Claire Callender

Report of a study supported by the IMS Co-operative Research Programme

CN 1466
£24.00 (IMS Subscribers, £16.00)
ISBN 1-85184-146-6
© Institute of Manpower Studies 1992
October 1992

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Acknowledgements

In addition to the financial support of the Co-operative Research Programme, this project owes much to the 47 organisations who went to considerable trouble to identify a suitable sample of women returning from career breaks, and to Jill Yeates who did not give up until our target of 1500 women was well exceeded. We are also indebted to the 800 women who found time in their overcrowded lives to complete the questionnaire. Sue Hayday was unfailingly patient and skilful in the computer analysis of the data collected.

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Summary

This is a summary of a research project into the working experience and career progress of professional and managerial women ***Beyond the Career Break*** (Institute of Manpower Studies Report No 223).

Background

After a decade of interest in retaining women in employment during their child-raising years, it seemed timely by 1990 to find out what was actually happening to highly skilled women who were returning to work after having a child. We chose to conduct a survey of women who would be seen by others as the 'success story' of retention - female managers and professionals, working for large employers, who had returned to their employers after taking a career break. We defined a 'career break' to be a break from work of any length of time to have a baby, from a few weeks to many years. The study was supported by the IMS Co-operative Research Programme (an employer research consortium).

Survey objectives

The objectives of the survey were:

- to examine the decision to return to work after having a child, and whether the practical management of breaks could be improved;
- to discover the career patterns of women returning from a break in the period since their return;
- to look at how returners feel about combining work and family life, and which practical issues are of most concern to them.

The sample

The results presented here are based on questionnaires completed in the Summer of 1991 by 785 women working for 45 different employers - a very sizeable sample.

Because the employers had weak historical records on career breaks, most of the sample had been back at work only a limited time since their most recent break (an average of just over two and a half years). Over three quarters had at least one pre-school child. This limited the extent to which longer term career progression could be examined, but gave us a very good opportunity to examine the experiences of working women with young children.

Surprisingly large numbers of part-timers appeared in the sample (29 per cent of the total), and also a significant number (17 per cent) who had worked part-time in the past but were working full-time at the time of the survey. This gave us the opportunity to examine differences in experience between full and part-timers.

Two thirds had taken only one break, and 70 per cent of the sample were in their thirties. They had taken their first break at an average age of thirty, the start of a crucial decade for managerial careers.

Managing career breaks

They were experienced workers for whom work identity was important - over 70 per cent were very sure they would return to work. They mainly took short breaks (80 per cent taking nine months or less). In deciding to return to work, the most important factors were close to home - childcare and the support of the partner. Important factors mainly in the control of the employer were the ability to fit in work with domestic circumstances and the specific job on offer.

The women felt mildly positive about most aspects of the way their break had been handled, although there was still much room for improvement. They felt most positive about their employers' confidence that they would return, and their own feelings of familiarity once back at work. They were less satisfied with the degree of contact during the break, updating on return and consultation about the job to which they would return. The study suggests that the management of career breaks has probably been improving over recent years.

Childcare

The sources of childcare most used were family members (including partners), childminders and nannies (mainly 'live-out'). Only about two per cent were using employer-provided or supported creches. Childcare arrangements changed frequently. The average childcare bill for those working full-time was £85 per week.

Although three quarters of the sample expressed some degree of anxiety about childcare, the largest group (56 per cent of the total) saw it as an intermittent worry. Concerns about childcare focused on two issues: how to cope when arrangements broke down, and cost.

The problems caused when childcare breaks down (through change of arrangement, illness of child or carer etc) emerge powerfully in this study. Perhaps employers should focus more of the effort they put into childcare into helping women through these intermittent periods of crisis. Indeed time off work when arrangements break down was the most desired enhancement to childcare (desired by 95 per cent, available to 18 per cent). The provision of emergency childcare may also be worth examining.

The sample also sent a strong message about the costs of childcare. Over 85 per cent called for financial help through tax relief (available to none) and employer assistance (available to only three per cent).

Three quarters of the women relied on their partners to help with childcare at least occasionally, and a third relied on their partners regularly or every working day. This reality is still ignored by the majority of employers of male managerial and professional staff.

Careers beyond the break

Only nine per cent returned to a job at a lower level than the one they had held before their break. Since their recent break a third had been promoted and a substantial number had made lateral or functional moves (nearly 30 per cent for each). Of those who had taken more than one break, 60 per cent had been promoted since their first break. We cannot say how these figures compare with their male colleagues, but there does at least seem to be some career progression beyond the break.

Two features of career progress are of special interest. Firstly, career progress was much more limited for part-timers than for full-timers. Secondly, most of the managers in the study had already reached management before their first career break.

Career satisfaction and career ambition

The sample were satisfied with their jobs and had suffered little drop in job satisfaction since their breaks. By contrast the sample were much less confident about their future careers, and their satisfaction with career progress had fallen since their breaks.

Levels of career ambition had also fallen for 60 per cent of the sample since having a family. Some saw their careers as 'waiting a while' (20 per cent of the sample) and others were still committed to their jobs but had lower career aspirations (30 per cent).

Lack of confidence about future career was also reflected in the women's perceptions of how others saw their career orientation and potential. Employers have an important role here in nurturing career ambition among women returners, and in talking to individual women about their career plans.

Flexible and part-time working

Flexible and part-time working emerge as very important issues in this study. The form of work flexibility most desired by the sample was time off for domestic emergencies including the breakdown of childcare arrangements. Also sought were flexibility in the timing of the working day, reduction in working hours and the ability to work from home (although 60 per cent thought this was not practical in their kind of work). Where employers were offering flexibility it was in those areas most desired, but provision fell far short of demand.

Part-timers had progressed less in their careers since their breaks, felt less positive about their access to training and development, and also felt less certain about their future career prospects. They had suffered a larger drop in career satisfaction and career ambition, and felt that others saw them as less career oriented and of lower potential. However, they were satisfied with many aspects of their working lives and registered less stress than those working full-time.

Even in the face of this strong perception that part-time working damages your career, about a third of the full-timers in the study would take up part-time work if this were an available option. About 58 per cent of the total sample would work part-time at some stage in their careers if they had the choice.

This leaves employers with a serious dilemma - how to deal with the substantial group of women who wish to work part-time even though this may damage their careers. If part-time working is extended further, its career consequences need to be more openly discussed and questioned.

Managers and senior managers

The sample was composed of about two thirds managers and one third professionals. Professionals were younger than managers and twice as likely to be working part-time. Managers emerged, not surprisingly perhaps, as surer of their work and career orientation and more confident of how others saw them at work. They were less likely to think that having a baby would affect their careers. The 54 senior managers in the sample had these distinctive attitudes to a greater extent.

General experiences of combining work with family

The respondents were generally positive about access to training and development, did not feel isolated, and thought attitudes to working mothers were improving. On other aspects of their experience at work their responses were only weakly positive, and left much room for improvement especially in employers' attitudes to their career development. The stress of combining work with family life emerged as the most negative aspect of their experience. They also believed that motherhood had affected other people's views of their career orientation. Significant numbers felt that they needed to keep their domestic responsibilities 'invisible' at work.

Lessons for other women taking breaks

The respondents offered the following advice to other women taking breaks:

- organise good childcare;
- enlist partner's co-operation;
- seek flexible arrangements at work;
- delegate more and get organised;
- develop a balanced attitude to work and home demands.

To this list we should perhaps only add:

- think very carefully about the pros and cons of full and part-time working;
- make as much career progress as possible before starting a family.

Lessons for employers

In the survey as a whole and in the advice which the respondents themselves gave to employers, four main themes emerged. They were concerned with flexibility, childcare, part-time working and assessment.

The issue of flexibility and understanding is very broad and reflects the many ways in which employers can make life manageable for these women, including minor adjustments to working patterns and a culture in which practical problems can be discussed. Understanding also means recognising that different women will have different priorities and concerns.

On the childcare front, there is little support from any quarter - state or employer. Although workplace childcare was requested by over 200 respondents, emergency time off and financial help were higher priorities for the sample as a whole. Employers should also be more realistic about the role in childcare taken by many fathers in dual career families.

On part-time working, the dilemma is clearly between accommodating the demand for part-time working, and keeping women in full-time work where their careers advance more readily. Combining part-time working with career development will be a key issue for the future.

The issue of assessment seems almost trite, but is critical. It was expressed by many respondents who asked their employers to judge them on performance against the same standards as their male peers. Many of the women in this study felt that having a child had adversely affected the way they were assessed by others, in terms of career and potential, and sometimes even performance.

This study has certainly shown that a productive and satisfying working life does exist 'beyond the career break' for many in this vanguard group. However, there are still some significant sources of stress in their attempts to combine work with family life. There is also an uncertainty for many in how they and their employers see their future careers.

Chapter One : Introduction

1.1 Background

Throughout the 1980's there was increasing interest in retaining women in employment through their child raising years. Earlier legislation had facilitated the taking of maternity leave, and employers were also interested in attracting back to employment women who had taken longer breaks from work to raise their children. This interest was, at least in part, driven by concern about skill shortages in the buoyant employment market of the late 1980's.

Even if the recession of the early 1990's has removed the issue of women returners from headline news, there is considerable concern in some quarters about the small numbers of women reaching senior posts (shown for example in the Opportunity 2000 initiative). Many employers are also still concerned that if they do not retain women who take a break to have children, they lose very valuable skills in which they have invested. There is also mounting evidence that women are returning to work in larger numbers after having a child, and also returning sooner (McRae and Daniel, 1991). Some employers are taking further measures (such as Career Break Schemes and flexible working options) to make it more attractive to women to combine the care of young children with work (Rajan and van Eupen, 1990).

However, the combining of work and motherhood still raises many issues. The practical problem of childcare in the UK is of concern to many. The combining of two roles - worker and mother - may give rise to considerable stress. There is also still strong evidence that women are under-utilised at work in the UK (Metcalf and Leighton, 1989) and that promotion of women into senior jobs is still restricted (Hirsh and Jackson, 1990).

It therefore seems timely to look at the reality of combining work and motherhood for women who are attempting to do so. This experience may be different for women in different occupational groups. Women in professional

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and managerial jobs represent a major investment for employers, and this is where they have concentrated most of their efforts at retention. This is also a group who may be expected to have a strong intrinsic interest in pursuing their careers, and who may suffer considerable tensions between success at work and satisfaction at home. Managerial and professional women therefore seemed an important and interesting target group for researching the reality of work and life 'beyond the career break'.

IMS therefore sought and obtained funding from the employers who support the Institute's Co-operative Research Programme to study the experiences of professional and managerial women returning to work after a having a child or after longer career breaks during which they have cared for their children.

1.2 Survey objectives

The original proposal was to put together a sample of managerial and professional women who had returned to work after a break and remained in employment, and also a sample of women who had returned from a break but subsequently left employment. Although IMS had a strong interest in looking at such leavers, early discussions with employers showed that tracking a suitable sample of these leavers would be very difficult indeed. Given the limited project resources, we therefore decided to concentrate on surveying a significant sample of women who had returned to their previous employers after taking a career break and were still employed. The study objectives were therefore refined, based on this target group.

The objectives of the study were:

- to examine the decision to return to work after having a child, and whether the practical management of breaks could be improved;
- to discover the career patterns of women returning from a break in the period since their return;
- to look at how returners feel about combining work and family life, and which practical issues are of most concern to them.

It is hoped that this study will give employers a richer understanding of the complex and often conflicting worlds in which working mothers live, and thereby help them target their own policies more effectively. The study may also be of interest to academics and working women.

1.3 Survey method

1.3.1 The sample

The required sample was of women working in professional and managerial jobs who had taken a break (whether short or long) from work to have one or more children and returned to the same employer.

Short breaks could be statutory maternity leave, enhanced maternity leave or even a few weeks taken off to have a baby. A longer break could be several years and be covered by an employer's Career Break scheme, or simply involve resignation and return to work for the same employer at any later date.

Originally it was hoped that a small number of major employers would provide the required sample. However, as so often in such studies, employers' information systems are not easily used to identify employees with particular types of employment history. The first finding of the study was that records of maternity leave and longer breaks present particular challenges in information retrieval. Even in large employers, the numbers of women in professional and managerial jobs who had taken leave and returned was often limited.

We therefore contacted 88 employers in search of a large enough sample. These employers included Subscribers to IMS and also employers who were known to be interested in retaining women. There was no attempt to find a sample of women who would be 'representative' of returners, but rather to look at returners working for organisations who ought to be among the best at managing this issue. The level of interest in the study was high and eventually 47 employers identified a sample of women who met the criteria. In some cases identifying the sample was quite a laborious process and did not rely on personnel records alone. For example, some participants used internal newsletters, women's networks or notices to ask women who met the survey criteria to come forward. One public sector employer sent questionnaires to all female staff and asked only those who met the criteria to complete the survey. Interestingly, this employer yielded far more women who took their breaks long ago than other participants. Clearly, employers do not know the career break history of their staff, and this may inhibit their own monitoring of equal opportunity issues.

1.3.2 Questionnaire design

The range of issues to be covered by the study was potentially very wide and preliminary interviews were used to identify areas of highest importance. Sixteen women in professional and managerial jobs employed by seven organisations were interviewed. They were varied in the number and length of breaks they had taken (from six weeks to five years).

Even this small sample showed how enormously variable the aspirations and experiences of working women can be. Some of the issues raised by women in these pilot interviews were as follows:

Managing the career break

- Vague administration of the break (eg lack of clarity on legal aspects), and appreciation of practical information, advice and support from employers (personnel departments, managers etc) where given.
- Sensitivity to how their jobs were filled in their absence.
- Variation in preferences for the length of break they wished to take, and for some the need to compromise these preferences to retain job or career options.

Deciding to return

- Strong desire to return to work based on a range of needs (eg financial) and preferences (eg pleasure in work, to keep identity, to use skills etc).
- A lack of role models among friends, family and at work of other women who had returned to work after having a child.
- The importance of support from their partners in returning to work.
- Patchy performance of bosses in encouraging return (eg one boss whose response was 'What did you want to go and get yourself pregnant for?')

Being back at work

- The job on return, if different from that left, was critical. Some had returned to jobs that were barely acceptable in the hope of renegotiating their position once back at work.
- Returners were often anxious about the return, but confidence returned quickly once routines became established and they were back in a job again.

- Flexibility in working patterns was sought, but policies were unclear. In particular women were unclear about taking time off to cover domestic emergencies. The need to leave work more promptly was seen as indicating reduced 'commitment' and therefore was perceived as reducing promotion opportunities.
- Not everyone wished to work part-time, but those who had done so felt that pioneering this option in senior jobs was hard.

Job and career satisfaction

- A high level of job interest was expected by the women, and the opportunity to keep up to date and receive appropriate training.
- They mainly felt their career prospects were reduced by having a child. Some women had lowered their aspirations. Others had not but thought their organisations would be more reluctant to promote them.

Childcare

- Childcare emerged as a critical issue. Quality of the carer and reliability of arrangements were both key.
- Employers were not seen as offering much help with childcare. Advice as well as provision would have been helpful.

Combining work and family

- Being a working mother presented some deep seated tensions - 'Equal opportunity is the ability to have a family and progress in a career - which men do without batting an eyelid'.
- Shortage of time and a feeling of endless compromise were common - 'I think you can have a perfectly satisfactory career and home life but you can't excel at either because of a shortage of time.'
- Finding an acceptable balance of priorities without guilt was made more difficult by a lack of role models, and by the negative attitudes of some managers.

These interviews were used together with wider research evidence to design a questionnaire. This was piloted and revised to improve clarity and interest. The questionnaire used in the survey is given as Appendix 1.

1.3.3 Survey administration and response

The limitations of employers' information systems, combined with the need for confidentiality, determined the survey approach. Employers collected the names of women whom they thought met the requirements of the survey, and invited others to come forward (eg through women's networks). Employers were then sent enough questionnaires to distribute to their own samples. The questionnaires were anonymous. Numbers distributed varied widely between the employers in the study from one to 210.

In total, 1651 questionnaires were sent out, in May 1991. A reminder letter was sent to all those who had been sent a questionnaire, again through their employers, and those wishing to respond at that time could obtain spare copies of the questionnaire from their employers or direct from IMS.

In some cases, not all the questionnaires were required and in others they were given out to some women who did not meet the criteria. One hundred and twenty three were returned to IMS as not meeting the sample criteria or inappropriate. An additional 22 were returned by the Post Office.

Of the 1651 questionnaires distributed 800 were returned to IMS by the time the survey was closed in July 1991. Of these 785 were subsequently used in analysis. This represents a response rate of 53 per cent. The respondents came from 45 different employing organisations.

1.4 Presentation of data

This study yielded an extremely rich data set and presented considerable problems in deciding which numerical information would be of most value to potential readers. Tables showing key features of results are displayed within the text of each chapter. Supplementary information is included in Appendices which are numbered in the same way as the chapters to which they are most relevant.

The numbers of respondents varied somewhat according to the question, and therefore the numbers of cases shown on tables combining different variables will not always be the same. On some of the tables which show the responses to several questions a minimum and maximum number of respondents (N) is indicated. These correspond to the responses on the questions which had the least and most replies respectively.

1.5 Structure of the report

The sample of women participating in the study is described in Chapter Two. This is of more than usual importance as the sample contains a preponderance of women in their thirties who have had their first child quite recently. They cannot therefore be taken as representative of all women who may have taken career breaks at any time in their working lives, but belong to a group of strong interest to employers. Patterns of full and part-time working also turn out to be important in subsequent analysis.

The remaining chapters follow the objectives of the study. The management of career breaks and the return to work is examined in Chapter Three. This looks at both the factual information on the length of breaks and their management, and also at women's perceptions of their decision to return and how their break was handled. Chapter Four looks at the particular issue of childcare, again both in terms of what forms of childcare the sample were using and its cost, and also feelings about childcare and priorities for assistance in this crucial area.

Chapter Five concentrates on the second study objective - the actual job and career patterns of this sample of returners. It covers both aspects of their current jobs (including working hours) and the job changes they have made since their return to work. Chapter Six looks at the availability of flexible working practices, including part-time working, and which aspects of flexibility would be most valued by the women themselves.

Chapter Seven deals with the third and more general objective of the study: attitudes to and feelings about combining work with the care of children. This covers job and career satisfaction, future career plans, and identifies areas of relative satisfaction and dissatisfaction in combining work with motherhood. It also presents the advice which the sample offered to women and to employers. Chapter eight summarises the findings of the study and raises issues for employers, policy makers and women themselves.

Chapter Two : The sample

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we explore the characteristics of the sample in terms of biographical information (age, marital status, qualifications), and examine the variables which will be used in the remainder of the report (pattern of breaks and dependency of children; patterns of full- and part-time working; current job by sector, function and level). The purpose of this is to assist the reader in understanding the relationship between these variables in later chapters, but also to paint a picture of what turned out to be a rather particular and perhaps atypical group of working women.

Questionnaires received from 785 women were included in the final analysis, although some of the tables will show figures less than this as not all respondents answered every question (see Section 1.4). By and large the quality of the data was high. However we must bear in mind that respondents assessed their own job levels (at various points in time), and analyses by job level are therefore dependent on these assessments.

2.2 Biographical details

Table 2.1 shows the profile of the respondents in terms of age, marital status and qualifications. Nearly 70 per cent of the sample were aged 30-39, with an overall mean age of 35. It was interesting to note that quite a small proportion of these professional and managerial women were returning from a career break under 30. The sample also contains few women over 40 (17 per cent of the sample). This could be because fewer of this age group are working for these particular employers after taking a break, and indeed this seems quite likely. However, it is also very likely that the employers did not pick up all the women who were working for them but had taken their breaks longer ago (Section 1.3.1).

Table 2.1: Profile of Respondents

	Number	%
Agegroup		
Under 30	117	15
30-34	287	37
35-39	250	32
40-44	86	11
Over 45	44	6
N =	784	100
Marital Status		
Single	10	1
Married	738	94
Separated/widowed/divorced	37	5
N=	785	100
Highest educational qualification		
CSE to A level	295	38
Degree	295	38
Higher degree	73	9
HNC/HND	51	7
Other	57	7
N =	771	100
Professional qualifications		
Yes	324	42
No	453	58
N =	777	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2, A3, A4 and A5)

The sample were almost all currently married or living with a partner (94 per cent). This study therefore cannot shed any light on the differences between married and separated or single working mothers.

Just under half the sample (47 per cent) gave their highest qualification as first or second degree. In addition to such educational qualifications, 42 per cent of the sample had a professional qualification. These were widely spread over professional occupations including banking, teaching, personnel, nursing and accountancy.

2.3 Children and career breaks

2.3.1 Number of children and breaks

Table 2.2 shows some basic information about the numbers of children which the sample women had, and their pattern of career breaks. Only 727 women gave unambiguous data on their number of children (Q A6) as the remainder ticked boxes rather than giving numbers. Over half the respondents to this question had just one child (54 per cent) and a further 37 per cent had two children. With small numbers having three or more children (nine per cent), this study cannot tell us much about the effect of larger families on working professionals and managers. The absence of women with larger families may indicate something about combining higher level work with motherhood, but may also result from the greater return rates among women starting their families in the last few years, so that the sample is dominated by relatively new mothers.

Table 2.2: Number of Children and Career Breaks

	Number	%
Total number of children		
One	394	54
Two	270	37
Three	50	7
Four	11	2
Five	1	0
Six	1	0
N =	727	100
Number of career breaks		
1	507	65
2	246	31
3	23	3
4	5	1
N =	781	100
Age at first career break		
Under 30	360	46
30-34	325	42
35-39	89	11
40-44	6	1
N =	780	100
Age on return from recent break		
Under 30	193	25
30-34	382	49
35-39	163	21
40-44	37	5
Over 45	4	1
N =	779	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6, B1, B2 and B3)

As we might expect from this pattern, the majority (65 per cent) had taken only one break from work to have children, while 31 per cent had taken two breaks. This study is therefore weighted by women who have had only one break, but also enables us to compare this with a significant size group (274 women) who had taken two or more breaks.

2.3.2 Age on taking first and most recent break

We have already seen that the women were mainly in their thirties. Four out of five in the sample took their first break when they were between 25 and 34 (Table 2.2), with the early thirties actually being a more common age for this than the late twenties. This adds weight to the argument that professional and managerial women are now having their first children at an age by which they have already acquired valuable skills and experience. It was interesting to see that having a first child at age 35 or over was considerably more common for this sample than having a first child when under 25.

The women were asked both about their first career break and also their most recent break. Obviously these were the same for the 65 per cent who had taken only one break, but different for the rest. Almost half the sample (49 per cent) had returned from their most recent break when aged 30-34. About a fifth of the sample had returned to work aged 25-29 and a similar percentage were 35-39.

2.3.3 Dependency of children and life stage

We were strongly interested in the interplay between career experience and the age of the respondents' children (as an indicator of their level of dependency). The dependency of children has been classified (as shown in Table 2.3) into four categories, according to the age of the youngest child (from Q A6): those with only pre-school children (64 per cent of the sample), both pre-school and school age (under 19) (14 per cent), school age children only (20 per cent) and children of 19 and over (1 per cent). Those with pre-school or school age children and also children over 19 are included in the pre-school and school age categories respectively (20 individuals in total). So we can see that nearly all the sample were actively involved in the care of children, with 78 per cent having at least one pre-school child.

Table 2.3: Dependency of Children by Age of Respondents

Dependency of children	Agegroup										Total Sample	
	Under 30		30-34		35-39		40-44		Over 45			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Preschool only	110	94	240	84	131	52	20	23	2	5	503	64
Preschool + school	5	4	33	11	62	25	9	10	2	5	111	14
School only	2	2	14	5	57	23	57	66	29	66	159	20
Older only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	25	11	1
N =	117	100	287	100	250	100	86	100	44	100	784	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6 and A2)

The respondents' life/career stage is perhaps best expressed by looking at the combination of the woman's age and the dependency of her children (as shown in Table 2.3). The women under thirty in the sample nearly all had only pre-school children, and this group still dominated those in their early thirties. The late thirties group shows the most complex pattern with just over half having only pre-school children, but significant numbers also with children at school. As we might expect, older women had fewer dependent children, but only in the over 45 age group do we find women with children over 19 and none still at school. It is again interesting when we consider the critical career moves made in the late thirties that this was the age group in our sample facing the most complex and variable demands of home life.

Table 2.4 compresses this information into a new variable we will call 'life stage'.

Table 2.4: Life Stage

Dependency of Children	Age Group	Numbers	%
Pre-school only	Under 30	110	14
	30-39	371	47
	Over 40	22	3
Pre-school and school age	Under 40	100	13
	Over 40	11	1
School age and older	Under 40	73	9
	Over 40	97	12
	N =	784	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6 and A2)

2.4 Time at work and employment status

2.4.1 Time at work since first break

As we have already seen, the majority of the sample had taken only one break, and that relatively recently. The average time back at work since the most recent career break was two years seven months. We also calculated a total figure for time spent in employment since the first career break taken (ie excluding time spent out of work on subsequent breaks). This is used in later chapters as a measure of the total post-break time over which women are pursuing their careers.

Table 2.5: Age by Time at Work since First Break

Years at work since first break	Agegroup										Total Sample	
	Under 30		30-34		35-39		40-44		Over 45			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under one year	61	54	85	30	37	15	5	6	0	0	188	24
1 year	32	28	75	26	37	15	5	6	1	2	150	19
2 to 4 years	19	17	106	37	95	39	23	27	2	5	245	32
5 to 10 years	2	2	19	7	63	26	32	38	10	23	126	16
Over 10 years	0	0	1	0	11	5	19	23	30	70	61	8
N =	114	100	286	100	243	100	84	100	43	100	770	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2 and B3)

As Table 2.5 shows, 24 per cent had been back at work for less than a year since their first break, and 51 per cent for between one and five years. Those with longer experience of combining work with motherhood were in the older age groups. There seemed little sign in this sample of women in their late thirties or forties who had taken very long breaks and then returned to work. Such women would have been less likely to fit the survey criteria (of returning to the same employer) and their earlier break might also not be on current personnel databases. Seventy three per cent of the respondents over 45 had been at work for over ten years since their first career break.

2.4.2 Employment status over time

Patterns of full and part-time working and their impact on career progression are of major importance in the light of pressure for more flexible working practices to help in combining career and family life. We therefore collected information both on current employment status and on the respondents' history of part-time working. Table 2.6 shows these basic patterns.

Table 2.6: Employment Status

	Number	%
Current employment status		
Employed full-time	516	66
Employed part-time	188	24
Job- sharing	36	5
Self-employed	2	0
On a career break	40	5
N =	782	100
Employment status over time		
Part-time	224	29
Has worked part-time	127	17
Always full-time	415	54
N =	766	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1 and G2)

The study did yield a group of 188 women (24 per cent) currently working part-time, plus 36 who were job-sharing - 29 per cent in these two groups combined. Given the supposed barriers to part-time working at professional and managerial levels, especially in organisations with formal employment policies, this was a larger group than we expected to see. However, it was quite close to the national figure of 28 per cent of female managers and professionals working part-time in 1989 (Department of Employment, 1990). Although the incidence of part-time working in the sample was highest in the public sector organisations, over 30 per cent of respondents in energy and manufacturing were also working part-time.

In addition, a substantial group (127 individuals, 17 per cent of the sample) had worked part-time at some time in the past but were now working full-time. These substantial groups of women working part-time and who had worked part-time in the past enabled us to explore the differences between part-time and full-time workers in relation to many of the career experiences of returning after a break. We therefore defined a new variable - employment status over time - as shown on Table 2.6. This divided 766 respondents into three categories - part-time (29 per cent), previously part-time (17 per cent), always full-time (54 per cent). This variable is used extensively in the remaining chapters of the report.

2.4.3 Employment status by dependency and life stage

Table 2.7 shows that the highest rates of current part-time working were among those women under 30 with only pre-school children (41 per cent of whom worked part-time) and those under 40 with both pre-school and school age children (38 per cent). Those women who had started their families later but still had pre-school children were less likely to be working part-time. Only 29 per cent of those aged 30-39 with pre-school children only were working part-time, and a further 15 per cent had worked part-time in the past (presumably not for very long). The lowest rates of part-time working were among those with no pre-school children. In the group over 40 with school age or older children, 19 per cent were working part-time and 38 per cent had done so in the past. In the group aged under 40 with school age or older children, the rates were 16 per cent and 21 per cent respectively.

Table 2.7: Employment Status over Time by Life Stage and Dependency

	Part-time status						Total Sample	
	Part-time		Has worked part-time		Always Full-time			
Life Stage	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	% of total
Under 30 + pre-school	43	41	7	7	56	53	106	14
30-39 + pre-school	107	29	54	15	202	56	363	47
Over 40 + pre-school	4	21	0	0	15	79	19	2
Under 40 + pre-school + school	37	38	14	14	47	48	98	13
Over 40 + pre-school + school	3	27	1	9	7	64	11	1
Under 40 + school + older	12	16	15	21	46	63	73	10
Over 40 + school + older	18	19	36	38	41	43	95	12
N =	224	29	127	17	414	54	765	100
Dependency								
Pre-school only	154	32	61	12	273	56	488	64
Pre-school + school	40	37	15	14	54	49	109	14
School/older	30	18	51	30	88	52	169	22
N =	224	29	127	17	415	54	766	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2, A6, E1 and G2)

2.5 Current job

Table 2.8 summarises the current employment of the respondents by three main variables: sector, function and level.

Table 2.8: Current Job

	Number	%
Sector		
Retail	61	8
Public	241	31
Manufacturing	91	12
Financial Services	214	27
Energy	94	12
Other Services	78	10
N =	779	100
Compressed Sectors		
Financial Services	214	27
Public	241	31
Manufacturing/Energy	185	24
Retail/Other Services	139	18
N =	779	100
Function		
IT	118	15
Sales/Marketing	84	11
Finance	120	15
Personnel	121	16
Administration	141	18
Public Sector	90	11
Other	106	14
N =	780	100
Current Job Level		
Junior Professional	90	12
Senior Professional	155	21
Junior Manager	194	26
Middle Manager	259	34
Senior Manager	54	7
N =	752	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A1, E3 and E4)

2.5.1 Sector

The respondents were spread among 45 employers. One large financial sector company accounted for 109 respondents (14 per cent), four employers had 40-55 respondents and the remainder each represented less than five per cent of the sample. The employers were very varied by business but tended to be large employers.

As shown in Table 2.8 the respondents were concentrated in the public sector (31 per cent) and financial services (27 per cent). In subsequent analysis, four compressed sectoral groups were used, combining manufacturing and energy, and also combining retail with other services. These compressed sectors (Table 2.8) show the largest group of respondents to be in the public sector (31 per cent), followed by financial services (27 per cent), manufacturing/energy (24 per cent) and retail/services (18 per cent).

Women outside the public sector were more likely to have only pre-school children. Of those with only school age children, over half were in the public sector, and nearly all of the small group with children over 19 were also in the public sector. This could be a genuine difference in populations, or could reflect better identification in the public sector of women who had children longer ago and returned to work. The respondents in the public sector were also most likely to have had two or more breaks (44 per cent), compared with 28 per cent for those in financial services (Appendix 2.1).

The public sector women were also more spread by age, with less of a concentration in the 25-35 age group.

2.5.2 Function

The main functions in which respondents worked are shown in Table 2.8. Administration, personnel, finance and IT were the largest groups. Some of the functions listed in the questionnaire (Q E3) had very few respondents working in them (eg five in production, ten in planning, 29 in R&D). Of the remaining 'others' 90 were in public sector occupations which did not equate with other sectors (eg teachers, nurses). These were recoded as public sector functions as shown on the table. The remaining participants were spread across a wide range of job functions.

2.5.3 Level

Respondents were asked to classify the level of their current job. Only two gave their level as 'trainee', so these were combined into the junior professional category as shown in Table 2.8. The largest single group defined themselves as 'middle managers' (34 per cent), followed by supervisors/junior managers (26 per cent). The sample contained 54 senior managers (seven per cent of respondents) who emerged in the analysis as different from the rest in some interesting ways.

In much of the analysis the sample is looked at on a simpler classification dividing professionals from managers. The total sample split into about two thirds managers and one third professionals.

Appendix 2.2 shows the breakdown of current job level by age group. The junior professionals and junior managers were the youngest groups, and also the most likely to have only pre-school children. The small group of senior managers split into two dominant groups - those in their 30's with only pre-school children (56 per cent) and those over 40 with school age or older children (26 per cent).

The highest proportions of managers were in finance (79 per cent) and services (77 per cent) compared with the public sector (60 per cent) and manufacturing (55 per cent).

Appendix 2.3 shows the patterns of employment status over time by job level. Professionals were more likely to be working part-time (42 per cent) than managers (21 per cent). Of the senior managers in the sample 78 per cent had always worked full-time and a further 16 per cent had worked part-time in the past but not currently.

2.6 Use of sample characteristics in analysis

In analysing the career experiences and attitudes of this group of women, we attempt, where possible, to highlight differences between various sub-groups. The main variables by which these sub-groups are defined are as follows: Employment status over time (part-time, previously part-time, always full-time); Dependency of children (pre-school, pre-school and school, school age, older); Job level (either as five broad levels or professionals versus managers); Sector (four compressed sectors).

Obviously, not all these variables are equally important to all aspects of the survey. Other variables are also used in chapters where they have strong relevance.

The relative difficulty of analysing the interactions between variables in this data set mirrors the difficulty employers have in understanding the varied needs of women returners. They have the usual variations which can be ascribed to different experiences at work (for example by job level), but they also have a second set of differences relating to their varied home circumstances (for example the dependency of their children). These two sets of differences interact strongly. For example part-timers are concentrated in the groups with young children, but then part-time working itself may influence job level. These interactions are not just of academic interest. They are crucial to employers and public policy makers who tend all too often to assume that 'all women' want and need the same response.

2.7 Summary

The following points emerged from examining the survey sample:

- **The sample consisted of 785 professional and managerial women who had returned to the same employer after taking a short or long career break.**
- **Their average age was 35 with nearly 70 per cent aged between 30 and 39. Almost all were married or living with a partner.**
- **Just over half the sample (54 per cent) had only one child and only 9 per cent three or more children. 65 per cent had taken only one break from work to have children, and a further 31 per cent had taken two breaks.**
- **81 per cent of the sample took their first break when they were aged between 25 and 34, with the early thirties being a more common age for this than the late twenties. Almost half the sample had returned from their most recent break (which was also the first break for two thirds of the sample) when aged 30-34.**
- **78 per cent had at least one pre-school child. 64 per cent had pre-school children only and 14 per cent had both pre-school and school aged children. 20 per cent had children at school only, and only a few had children who were all over 19.**
- **Many had been back at work for a relatively short time since their most recent career break - an average of 2 years 7 months. Even those who had taken more than one break had spent on average under 4 years in employment since their first break (excluding later breaks), and had their first break just under 5 years ago.**
- **The survey contained a surprisingly high number of women who were working part-time (188). Including 36 who were job-sharing, 29 per cent of the sample were working part-time. An additional large group (127, 17 per cent of the sample) had worked part-time in the past but were working full-time again. Rates of part-time working were highest among those with pre-school children and also among those who had their children younger.**
- **The respondents were split into 4 main sectoral groups: public sector (31 per cent), financial services (27 per cent), manufacturing/ energy (24 per cent) and retail/ services (18 per cent). The public sector sample were older, more likely to have taken two breaks and to have older children.**
- **The largest functional groups represented were administration, personnel, finance, IT and public sector professions (teaching, nursing etc).**
- **Two thirds of the sample classified their current job level as management and one third professional. The sample contained 54 senior managers, of whom over half were in their thirties with only pre-school children. Professionals were twice as likely to be working part-time (42 per cent) as were managers (21 per cent).**

Chapter Three : Career Breaks

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the career breaks taken by the respondents. It addresses the first objective of the study: namely, to examine the decision to return to work after having a child, and whether the practical management of breaks could be improved. As defined for the purpose of this study (see Section 1.3.1), a 'career break' is taken to be any break from work to have children, ranging from periods much shorter than statutory maternity leave to long breaks of many years. All the women in the sample had returned to their previous employer after their most recent career break.

This chapter is organised into three main sections (roughly covering sections B, C and D in the questionnaire). We first look at the factual information on the pattern of career breaks that the sample had taken. The second section looks at the factors which the participants felt had influenced their decision to return to work after their most recent break. The third section looks in a more general way at the experiences of the sample in managing their most recent break, how they felt about returning to work, and how they perceived the response of their employers.

3.2 Patterns of career breaks

This section looks at the factual information on the career breaks of the respondents: the number and timing of their breaks, the age of the women when they took breaks, their length of time back at work, the length of time taken off, and the type of leave taken and how their jobs were covered in their absence.

3.2.1 Number of career breaks

As we have already seen in Chapter Two, about two-thirds of the sample (65 per cent) had taken only one break. 31 per cent had taken two breaks, three per cent three breaks and only five people (less than one per cent of the sample) had taken more than three breaks.

Those who had always worked full-time were rather more likely to have had only one break (68 per cent), than those working part-time (63 per cent) or those who had worked part-time in the past (60 per cent).

Obviously there is a relationship between number of breaks taken and dependency of children, as shown in Table 3.1. Those who had taken only one break mainly had only pre-school children (77 per cent). Those who had taken two or more breaks were more evenly split between the pre-school and school age groups, and also accounted for most of those who had both children of pre-school age and also children at school.

Table 3.1: Number of Breaks by Dependency of Children

Dependency of Children	Number of Career Breaks								Total Sample	
	1		2		3		4			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Pre-school only	392	77	107	43	2	9	0	0	501	64
Pre-school + school	10	2	85	35	14	61	1	20	110	14
School only	95	19	53	22	7	30	4	80	159	20
Older only	10	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	11	1
N =	507	100	246	100	23	100	5	100	781	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6 and B1)

The senior managers in the sample were the most likely to have taken more than one break (48 per cent). They were older and had been back at work longer (see Appendix 3.1), so they were more likely to have completed their families. However, we know from other sources that senior managers are very often childless (Alban Metcalf, 1987; Nicholson and West, 1988). This study shows that of those managerial women whose careers survive one child, a good many may survive two!

As we have already seen in Chapter Two, the respondents in the public sector were more spread by age and more likely to have older children. They were more likely to have had more than one break (44 per cent).

3.2.2 Age at time of career break

As we have already seen in Chapter Two, this is very much a sample of women in their thirties who were also having their children when well established in their careers. Forty two per cent were aged 30-34 when they started their first career break, and another 39 per cent were aged 25-29. The average age on starting the first break was 30 years.

If we look at the ages of women returning from their most recent break, 49 per cent were aged 30-34 with rather over 20 per cent in each of the age groups above (35-39) and below (25-29). Although such women have the advantage of considerable bargaining power with their employers, they have the problem that their years with young children are also those in which male career patterns assume extremely high commitment to work and frequent, often radical, career moves.

Those who were in senior professional and middle or senior management jobs were more likely to have had their first break in their early thirties (44 per cent and 47 per cent respectively) compared with junior professionals and junior managers (36 per cent and 38 per cent respectively). These latter two groups were more likely to have had their first break in their late twenties. This does seem to give some backing to the view that women improve their career chances by ensuring their careers are firmly established before having their children.

3.2.3 Time at work since breaks

The sample had been back at work after their most recent break for an average of just over two and a half years. Sixty three per cent of the sample had been back at work for less than two years after their most recent break. Thirty five per cent had been back less than one year (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Years at Work since First and Recent Break by Employment Status over Time

	Employment status over time						Total Sample	
	Part-time		Has worked part-time		Always full-time			
Years in work since 1st break	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under one year	65	30	14	12	102	25	181	24
1 year	47	21	17	14	83	20	147	20
2 to 4 years	80	37	39	33	121	29	240	32
5 to 10 years	18	8	29	24	76	18	123	16
Over 10 years	9	4	21	18	31	8	61	8
Years since returned from recent break								
Under one year	102	47	23	19	135	33	260	35
1 year	59	27	36	29	115	28	210	28
2 to 4 years	41	19	32	26	94	23	167	22
5 to 10 years	11	5	17	14	50	12	78	10
Over 10 years	5	2	16	13	16	4	37	5
N =	218	100	124	100	410	100	752	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2, B2, B4, B5, B6, E1 and G2)

The full-timers returned from their most recent break longer ago than the part-timers. Those who currently worked full-time but had worked part-time in the past had been back at work for longer also. As shown in Appendix 3.1, respondents in higher level jobs still had a concentration of respondents who had only been back at work a short while. Of the senior managers, only 27 per cent had been back at work over five years since their most recent break.

For the two thirds of the sample who had taken only one break, their most recent break was also obviously their first break. So the figures for time at work since first career break are not all that different (Table 3.2). Twenty four per cent of the sample had been at work for less than a year since their first break (allowing for the time they may have taken off work for subsequent breaks). Three quarters of the sample had been at work for less than five years since their first career break. If we look only at those who had taken more than one break, their first break had been taken on average 4.9 years ago. If we subtract time they had spent away from work on subsequent breaks, their time in employment since that first break was on average 3.7 years.

The sample from the finance sector had taken breaks more recently than others (Appendix 3.2).

These data on time at work since recent and first breaks will be used in Chapter 5 when we examine career progression. However, the relatively short time back at work for many in the sample limits the extent to which this study can be used to look at the longer term consequences of combining work and family. The recent return to work may just be a property of how the sample was identified, but may also reflect in part the recent rise in early return to employment.

3.2.4 Length of career breaks

Forty per cent of the sample were off work for 7-9 months on their most recent career break and 34 per cent for 4-6 months (Table 3.3). Of those who had taken more than one break, 55 per cent had been away from work for between one and two years in total, and 34 per cent for less than one year in total.

Table 3.3: Length of Most Recent Break by Employment Status over Time

Length of most recent break	Employment status over time						Total Sample	
	Part-time		Has worked part-time		Always full-time			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-3 months	3	1	8	7	36	9	47	6
4-6 months	40	19	35	29	180	44	255	34
7-9 months	113	53	38	32	148	36	299	40
10-12 months	35	16	8	7	26	6	69	9
Over 1 year	24	11	30	25	20	5	74	10
N =	215	100	119	100	410	100	744	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B5, E1 and G2)

As shown in Table 3.3, women who have always worked full-time take more 'short' breaks (less than seven months). Bearing in mind the occupational level of these women, it is hard to say whether this is by choice. It may be that women who wish to maintain their career progress feel that both full-time working and short career breaks are necessary.

Second breaks tended to be shorter than first breaks (Appendix 3.3). So we see that nearly 90 per cent of women taking more than one break were still off work for less than two years in total. This particular group of women are therefore taking very little time off work to have their children.

Patterns may well be changing rapidly at present. Those who had only pre-school children, and who had therefore taken their first break quite recently, seemed more likely to have only a short break - 87 per cent had taken a break of less than ten months. Those who had their children longer ago (school age children only) had taken longer breaks (64 per cent less than ten months). We must also remember that more in this category worked in the public sector where maternity leave is often enhanced and where it may also have been easier for teachers, nurses etc to return to their professions after longer breaks. Certainly, the public sector respondents appeared to have longer breaks (Appendix 3.4).

Managers took rather shorter career breaks than professionals (Appendix 3.5), and of the small group of 53 senior managers for which information was available, 60 per cent took a recent break of less than seven months.

3.2.5 Type of leave

The respondents were asked whether they had resigned to take a career break or been covered by maternity leave or an employer's scheme. Eighty per cent of the sample had never resigned to take a career break. Those who had their children longer ago - including those in the public sector - were more likely to have resigned. Eighty four per cent of the breaks taken by the sample were covered by statutory maternity leave, although some respondents were unclear as to their legal position.

Only nine per cent of the respondents said none of their breaks were covered by statutory maternity pay but, more interestingly, 29 per cent did not know whether they were covered or not. One hundred and twenty five women (16 per cent of the sample) said one or more of their breaks had been covered by an employer's long break or returner scheme. These were mainly in the finance and service sectors. There also appeared to be some confusion about maternity pay, with respondents unclear as to whether they were covered by statutory provision or an enhanced scheme. However only eight per cent claimed not to have received any maternity pay and less than one per cent more than 18 weeks' pay. Those in the public sector were more likely to be paid for longer than statutory provision.

There are a couple of general points for employers here. It does not follow that just because some women are in senior posts they do not need clear information as to their leave and pay entitlements. It also seems that employers offering enhanced maternity benefits do not necessarily ensure that their employees understand this.

3.2.6 Job cover

What happens to the jobs of professional and managerial women who take a career break? Thirty seven per cent of jobs were filled permanently, 28 per cent filled temporarily and 30 per cent left vacant. As shown in Table 3.4, managers' jobs were less likely to be left vacant.

Table 3.4: How Job was Filled during Break by Current Job Level

How job was filled in absence	Current Job Level				Total Sample	
	Professional		Managerial			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Left vacant	98	41	133	26	231	31
Filled temporarily	52	22	156	31	208	28
Filled permanently	82	34	191	38	273	37
Other	9	4	24	5	33	4
N =	241	100	504	100	745	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B9 and E2)

Full-timers and those taking a second break were more likely to have their jobs filled temporarily in their absence. These are also the groups who took shorter breaks. Those with older children were also more likely to have had their job filled permanently in their absence. This may be because they had their breaks longer ago and took longer breaks. It seems quite an optimistic finding from the employees' perspective that over half the sample had their jobs 'held' for them either by leaving a vacancy or by filling it temporarily. This is also interesting given the large size of most of the sample organisations where one might well expect less flexibility in such arrangements. Jobs were more likely to be filled permanently with another employee in the financial and public sectors (Appendix 3.6).

3.3 The decision to return

The participants were asked to reflect on their decision to return to work, how certain they were of returning, and several aspects of their attitudes to return. We were interested in the reaction of the respondents to their employers' handling of return, the importance of the job on offer, the need for career continuity, and the part played by the support of colleagues and visible role models. We were also interested in the part played by partners and family in encouraging return, and the influence of childcare.

3.3.1 Certainty of return

This sample of women were fairly sure when they started their most recent break that they would return to work afterwards. Seventy one per cent were 'very sure' they would return and a further 21 per cent thought they would return. Well over half also felt that their employers definitely expected them to return (Question D1), and about three quarters that their employers definitely or probably expected them to return. Those who were 'very sure' of returning were most likely to see their employers as also sure of their return.

The certainty of return was highest for those who had always worked full-time (80 per cent very sure) and lowest for those who had worked part-time in the past but now worked full-time (56 per cent). This group had breaks longer ago and was the most likely to be 'very unsure' about their return (17 per cent). Attitudes may well have changed over recent years, as those with older children were more likely to see themselves as unsure about returning. Those currently working part-time were more likely (31 per cent) than the full timers (14 per cent) to place themselves in the intermediate category ('thought I would return'). Perhaps for them the need to agree part-time working details added more uncertainty.

Table 3.5: Certainty of Returning to Work by Number of Breaks

Number of breaks	Certainty of return to work						Total Sample	
	Very unsure		Thought I would		Very sure			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
One break	49	10	113	22	345	68	507	100
More than one break	17	6	49	18	208	76	274	100
Total	66	8	162	21	553	71	781	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B1 and C1)

As shown in Table 3.5, those who had taken more than one break were more sure about their return to work from their most recent break, than those for whom it was the first break. They were also more likely to think that their employers expected them to return. Professionals were rather less sure (64 per cent) than managers (75 per cent) about returning. Sector differences were not strong, although more in the public sector (13 per cent) had been very unsure of their return. However, this could also be the influence of breaks taken longer ago, which were more prevalent in the public sector sample. Those who were surest of their return had the shortest breaks (Appendix 3.7), although cause and effect could operate here in both directions.

3.3.2 Factors influencing return to work

The participants were asked to rate a number of factors which may have influenced their decision to return to work. Each factor was expressed as a statement with a four point scale from 'very important' (in influencing decision) to 'not at all important'.

Figure 3.1 summarises the responses by plotting the mean response to each statement. The distributions of responses are given in Appendix 3.8.

The responses seemed to break down into three groups - very important factors, quite important factors, and less important factors.

In rank order of mean value (most important first), the factors most influencing return to work were:

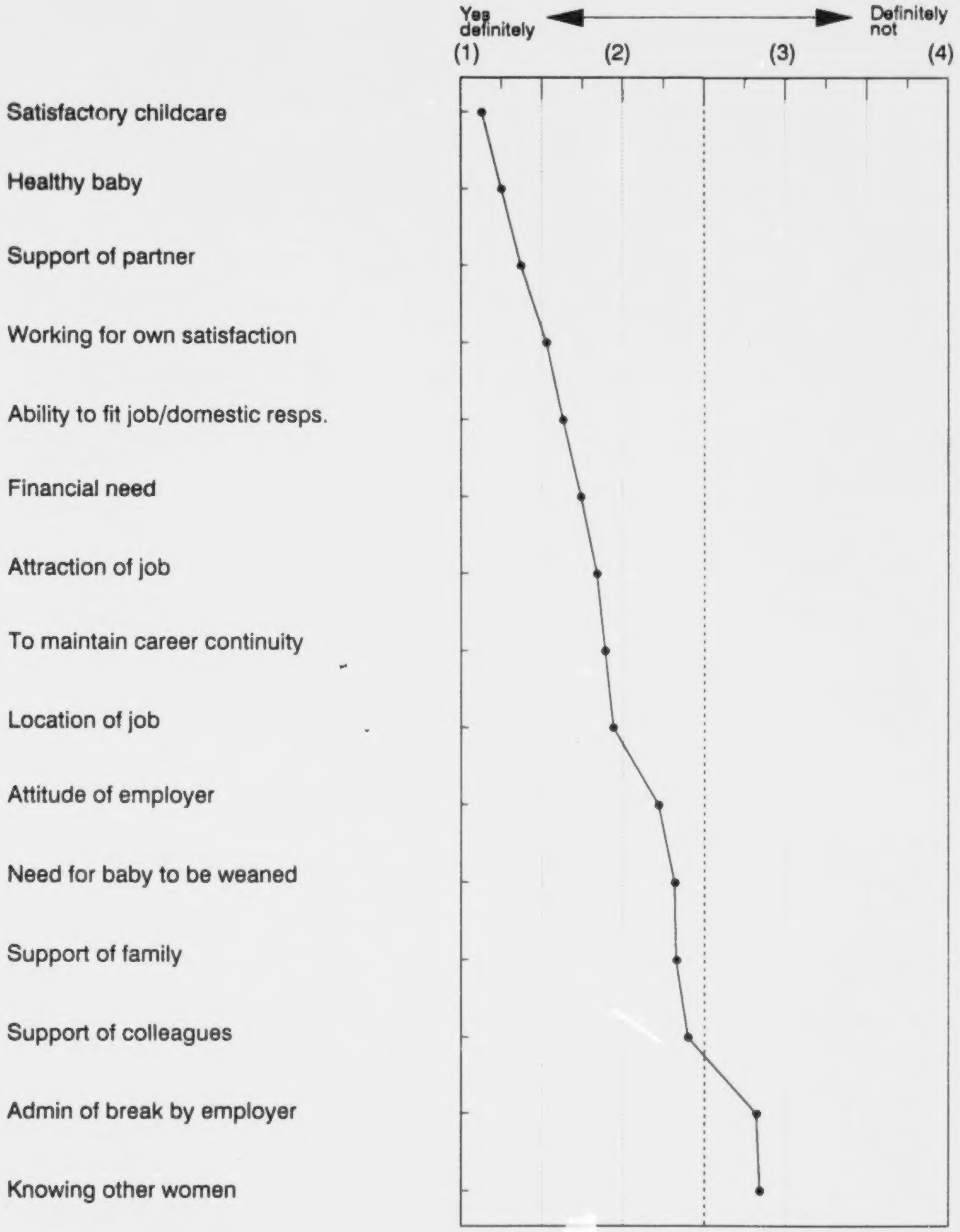
- the ability to organise satisfactory childcare;
- having a healthy baby;
- having the support of my partner;
- my desire to work for my own satisfaction;
- the ability to fit my job with domestic responsibilities;
- financial need.

These factors were also those receiving the highest percentage of 'very important' scores.

The factors coming out as 'quite important' but not making the top six were:

- the attraction of the job to which I would return;
- the need to maintain career continuity;
- the geographical location of the job on offer.

Figure 3.1: Factors influencing the decision to return



Source: IMS Survey, 1991

The factors rated as least important (lowest first) were:

- knowing other women who had successfully managed their career break and return;
- the effective administration of the career break by my employer;
- the support of my colleagues at work;
- having the support of other family members;
- the need for my baby to be weaned or part-weaned;
- the general attitude of my employer.

This seems at first sight seems to present a problem for employers. The things they are told to work hard at - administration, attitudes, providing role models -seem to be rated as less important by this sample of returners. The factors really making the most difference are closer to home - the baby, the partner, childcare and their intrinsic interest in working. It does tend to reinforce the message from other research that childcare and work flexibility are both of high importance (Hirsh and Jackson, 1990). The need to earn should also not be underestimated.

However, we should also note that even the factors rated as less important were still significant for a considerable percentage of the sample. For example, career break administration was quite or very important to 39 per cent of respondents, and the general attitude of the employer was quite or very important to two thirds of the respondents.

This implies that employers should address a wide range of these factors. Concentrating more on the high impact factors would imply a stronger focus on childcare and flexibility. The attraction and location of the job on offer also merit higher priority. The importance of partner's support is also a salutary reminder. One wonders how many employers have thought about strategies for getting partners on their side. For example, meetings or information packs aimed at fathers might at least acknowledge their role in this key decision.

3.3.3 Variation in factors influencing return by group

There were some apparent differences in the extent to which different factors were rated as important by groups within the sample.

Those working part-time rated several factors rather more highly than those who had always worked full-time (Appendix 3.9i). They were more sensitive to the employer's general approach, the location of the job, and the ability to fit job with domestic responsibilities.

Appendix 3.9ii shows mainly small differences between managers and professionals in the factors influencing their return. Senior managers emerge as rather more different in their attitudes. They were less concerned with the support of colleagues, partner and family, and role models. They were also less influenced by financial need, and the ability to fit job and domestic responsibilities. They emphasised factors intrinsic to the job and their own career: the attraction of the job, the desire to work for their own satisfaction and to maintain career continuity.

Location was significantly more important to those who said that geographical mobility was important to their future career progress (Question J2).

Those taking their first career break were more affected by administration and significantly more likely to rate role models as important. Those on second and subsequent breaks were more influenced by domestic fit. Respondents with older children were more sensitive to location. Those with pre-school children (ie who had taken this break more recently) tended to place more emphasis on the support of their partners.

3.4 Experience of career breaks

Having examined the relative importance of certain factors to their decision to return, the respondents were asked to reflect on the experience of their most recent career break. They were asked to agree or disagree with a number of statements derived from other research and pilot interviews as representing important aspects of this experience (Q D1). Each statement was rated on a four point scale from definitely agree to definitely disagree. The statements covered procedures at work (eg 'I was consulted about the job to which I was returning'), general perceptions (eg 'Organising work and home gets easier as children get older') and feelings (eg 'Once I was back at work, I felt as though I had never left').

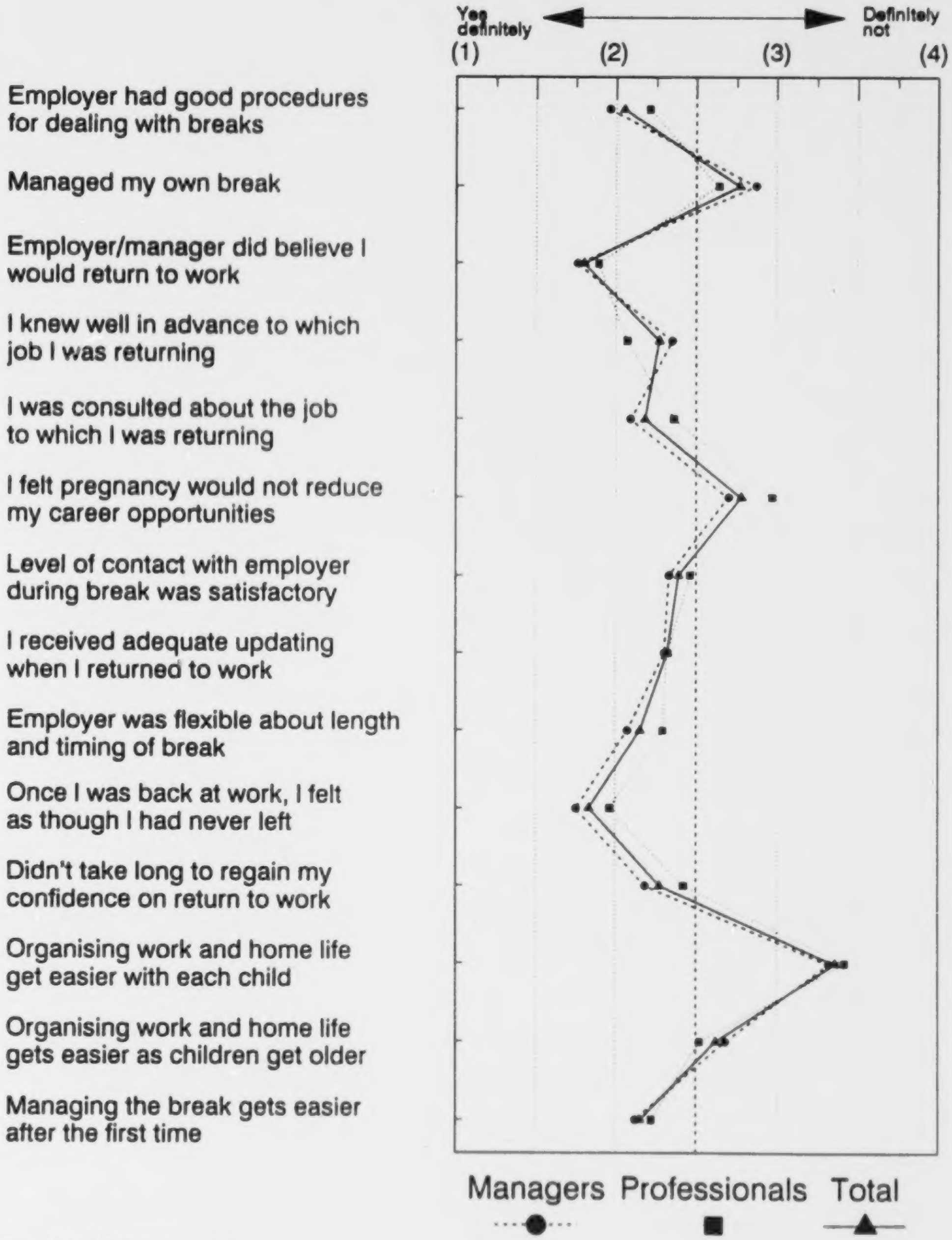
Figure 3.2 shows the mean values for each statement of those replying to the question, and the values for professionals and managers separately. Appendix 3.10 shows the numerical responses to this question. The statements on Figure 3.2 have been adjusted to read positively. Points near the left hand side read as positive experiences and those near the right are more negative.

By and large we see that the respondents felt positive about most aspects of their breaks, but only just positive (between 'to a little extent' and 'to some extent') for several aspects concerned with employers' management of the break.

Areas with the most positive responses were employer's confidence in their return, and feeling 'as if they had never left' once back at work. Areas where there was considerable room for improvement included contact during the break, updating on return and consultation about the job to which they would return. There was a feeling that pregnancy reduced career opportunities (65 per cent definitely or to some extent). In terms of how the practical problems of organising home and work change over time, respondents with more than one child felt that organising home and work got harder with each child. There was a difference of view as to whether things got easier as children got older.

By and large full-timers and part-timers registered similar experiences (Appendix 3.11i). The biggest differences were in knowing the job to which they were returning and the length of time it took to regain confidence, where the experiences of part-timers were rather less positive. Full-timers were less likely to think that pregnancy would reduce their career opportunities. However, they were less satisfied with the level of contact during the break and registered less flexibility over the timing and length of break. Full-timers were also less likely to feel that organising home and work got easier as children got older.

Figure 3.2: Experience of Career Breaks - Managers/Professionals -



Source: IMS Survey, 1991

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Differences in attitudes according to dependency of children were not great, but in hopeful directions. Those who had their recent break longer ago - whose children were all of school age - were less likely to think their employers had good procedures for managing the break, and more likely to feel they had managed their own break. They were also more likely to believe their employer was not expecting them to return, less likely to feel there was flexibility about length and timing of the break, and less positive about their updating on return. All these items may point to improvement in the management of career breaks over the last five years. Those with both pre-school and school age children were less confident about things getting easier as children grow than those whose youngest child was already at school.

Figure 3.2 (and Appendix 3.11ii) shows modest differences between professionals and managers, with managers having a slightly more positive view of a number of aspects. Rather strangely, they were less likely to know which job they would be returning to, but more likely to be consulted about this - perhaps implying that these decisions are less clear cut between managers and their employers. Managers, especially senior managers, were less likely to think that pregnancy affected their career opportunities. Senior managers were also more confident once back at work, although as we have already seen (Section 3.2.4) they took shorter breaks.

3.5 Summary

- 65 per cent of the sample had taken only one break. The first break was taken at an average age of thirty. Nearly half the sample returned from their most recent break in their early thirties - a critical time for careers. The sample had not been back at work very long since their most recent break - only about two and a half years on average.

- Most of the sample were taking relatively short breaks - 80 per cent took nine months or less. Nearly 90 per cent of those who had taken more than one break had only taken less than two years out of work in total. Managers took shorter breaks than professionals, and 60 per cent of senior managers had taken a break of less than 7 months.

- 80 per cent had never resigned to take a career break. 16 per cent had been covered by a long break or returner scheme.

- 58 per cent had their jobs 'held' for them by either leaving it vacant (30 per cent) or filling it temporarily (28 per cent).

- 71 per cent were very sure they would return from their recent break (80 per cent for those who had always worked full-time). Managers and those returning after their second break were even more certain of coming back to work.

- Childcare was the most important factor in the decision to return to work. Also very important were having a healthy baby, support of partner, intrinsic desire to work, ability to fit work with domestic responsibilities and money. Some of the factors on which employers have concentrated (effective career break administration, role models etc) were less important. Employers could focus more effort on partners, assistance with childcare and work flexibility. The particular job on offer was also important to many women and should not be treated lightly.

- Experiences of taking a break were mainly positive although not strongly so. The most positive feelings were around employer's confidence they would return and feeling 'they had never left' once back at work. There was lower satisfaction with the level of contact during the break. 65 per cent believed pregnancy would affect their careers definitely or to some extent. Most felt organising home and work got harder with each child. Several aspects of career break management seemed to have improved over recent years.

- Managers, especially senior managers, were less likely than professionals to think that pregnancy would affect their careers.

Chapter Four : Childcare

4.1 Introduction

Not surprisingly, the ability to organise satisfactory childcare emerged in Chapter Three as the most important factor in the decision to return to work after a career break. This chapter covers aspects of the survey which sought both factual and attitudinal information about childcare. Under factual information, we examine the forms of childcare used by the respondents and their cost. Under attitudes to childcare we examine how much the respondents expressed anxiety about childcare, and its influence on career choice. We also report on the respondents' preferences for assistance with childcare, and which forms of assistance were already available to them.

4.2 Childcare use and cost

Respondents were asked about the forms of childcare they were using at the time of the survey and in the past, frequency of changing arrangements, and cost. In examining the findings it is worth remembering that 63 per cent of the sample had only pre-school children, and that 54 per cent had only one child. Nearly three-quarters of those with two children still had at least one of pre-school age. The high proportion with at least one pre-school child (78 per cent) obviously influences the forms of childcare used.

4.2.1 Forms of childcare used currently and in the past

As shown in Table 4.1, three types of childcare were fairly widely used. About a fifth of the respondents were currently using nannies (22 per cent), mainly 'live out' or shared nannies rather than 'live-in' (only five per cent). About a third were using family members (12 per cent partners and 20 per cent other family members), although this may not have been for all working hours. About 29 per cent were using childminders. A further 13 per cent used 'other' forms of childcare which were mainly nurseries, playgroups and friends.

Table 4.1: Childcare Used by Employment Status over Time

Form of Childcare used	Part-time		Was part-time		Always full-time		Total	
	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %
Live-in Nanny	1.8	1.3	8.7	3.1	13.5	7.7	9.3	5.0
Live-out/shared Nanny	19.2	13.3	22.8	11.8	30.1	20.2	25.7	16.8
Au-pair	3.6	2.2	6.3	2.3	2.7	1.2	3.6	1.6
Partner	23.2	14.2	23.6	12.5	19.5	10.6	21.0	11.7
Other family members	38.8	21.8	44.9	25.2	33.0	18.1	36.4	20.1
Local authority creche/nursery	3.6	1.7	5.5	0.7	4.6	2.6	4.3	2.0
Employer's creche/nursery	1.8	1.3	4.7	1.5	2.4	1.9	2.5	1.7
Childminder	56.3	39.2	55.9	15.7	47.0	28.4	51.1	29.4
Employer's play scheme	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.3	0.1
Other	19.6	15.6	20.5	11.8	17.1	12.5	18.3	13.4
N =	224		127		415		785	

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions H1, E1 and E4)

Note: More than one type of childcare could be used by respondents

Few were using au pairs, or Local Authority or employers' creches or nurseries. Under two per cent were using an employer run or supported creche, an option available to about six per cent of respondents (see Table 4.4). Very few indeed have used employer run play-schemes (only two individuals). For all the talk of employer provided or supported childcare, there was little evidence of it in practice, even among this sample from employers who have a stronger than average interest in retaining women. This general pattern echoes the general pattern of provision in the UK (Metcalf, 1990).

There were some differences by employment status. Those who had always worked full-time were more likely to be using a nanny and less likely to be using family members. Those currently working part-time were the most likely to use childminders. The small sample of senior managers appeared to be less likely to use childminders than other respondents.

As shown on Table 4.1, many women have used a variety of forms of childcare over time. Over half had used childminders at some stage (including currently), and over half had also used partners or family members at some stage.

The pattern of use does vary with children's dependency (see Appendix 4.1). Respondents with both pre-school and school aged children were the group most likely to use nannies (37 per cent). Those with only pre-school children used childminders more and their partners rather less. Even among those with only pre-school children, only two per cent used an employer's creche or nursery.

Respondents in the different sectors on the whole have the same pattern of childcare (Appendix 4.2). Those in the public sector were less likely to be using a nanny, but these women also had older children. The finance sector had the highest rate of using an employer run or supported creche, but this still applied to only 3.7 per cent of respondents.

Only 13 per cent of the respondents made different childcare arrangements in the school holidays although, of course, many only had young children. Of those with children of school age and none pre-school, a third made different arrangements in the holidays.

4.2.2 Reliance on partner

As we have seen, about 12 per cent of respondents saw their partner as one of their 'forms of childcare'. Another question (H6) asked how often they relied on their partner's help in caring for children while they were at work. Three quarters of the respondents to this question relied on their partners at least occasionally and about a third regularly (15 per cent) or every day (18 per cent). The pattern was roughly similar across sectors and between managers and professionals. Part-timers were more likely to rely on their partners 'occasionally' and less 'every working day'. Those with both pre-school and school age children relied most on their partner's care, only 11 per cent saying they never relied on their partners.

Clearly not all those respondents who use their partners to look after the children see them as a formal source of 'childcare'. However, this pattern should give some food for thought to employers who do not seem to expect their male employees to be taking a significant part in the care of children. In practice, many of the women in this study see their partners as a key element in managing their home and work roles.

4.2.3 Frequency of change

Of those who responded to the question on when they last made new childcare arrangements, nine per cent were currently changing, 52 per cent had changed within the last year, and a further 14 per cent in the last two years (Appendix 4.3).

Although many of the women had returned from recent breaks, these figures still show high volatility of childcare. For example, a third of full-timers had been back from their most recent break for less than a year, but 54 per cent had changed their arrangements for childcare over this period. Only 19 per cent of those who had worked part-time in the past had been back at work for less than a year since their recent break, but still over half of this group had changed their arrangements in the past year.

Appendix 4.4 shows that things do get easier once children are all at school, but even of this group, over 40 per cent had made arrangements within the last year and seven per cent were currently changing arrangements.

This volatility of childcare is seldom recognised by employers. In that sense, childcare is no a problem which is 'solved' by a working mother. Arrangements are made, and re-made, and changed, and made again. This happens both because of changing family requirements and because of the volatile labour market for carers.

4.2.4 Cost of childcare

The survey requested information on the weekly cost of childcare (in terms and school holidays) and the cost of extra domestic help.

Of those who replied, 10 per cent spent nothing on childcare in term-time. This figure was 20 per cent in the public sector (including teachers), and substantially lower elsewhere. In the public sector, 27 per cent paid nothing for holiday care, compared with 13-15 per cent elsewhere. The public sector figures for those with school age children who do not pay anything for childcare were inflated by the teachers in the sample who could fit work more easily around school hours.

Table 4.2: Amount Spent on Childcare during Term by Employment Status over Time

Average weekly amount for care (term-term)	Employment Status over Time						Total Sample	
	Part-time		Has worked part-time		Always Full-time			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Nothing	27	13	19	17	26	7	72	10
Under £25	31	15	9	8	23	6	63	9
£25-£49	65	31	21	19	57	15	143	20
£50-£74	46	22	29	26	104	27	179	25
£75-£99	18	9	9	8	47	12	74	11
£100-£149	14	7	16	14	76	20	106	15
£150-£199	3	1	6	5	35	9	44	6
Over £200	4	2	2	2	16	4	22	3
N =	208	100	111	100	384	100	703	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2 and H4)

Of the respondents to this question shown in Table 4.2, the average weekly spend was £67 in term-time. This figure becomes £75 if we take out those who paid nothing for childcare. Three quarters of the sample spent less than £100 per week. The top three per cent spent between £200 and £350 per week on childcare in term-time.

Obviously, part-time workers pay less for childcare (see Table 4.2). Of those who had always worked full-time, 67 per cent paid less than £100 per week in term-time, and 20 per cent between £100 and £150. Those who had always worked full-time spent on average £85 per week in term-time (excluding those who spent nothing).

Childcare costs were higher for those who had more than one child - virtually doubling with the second child. They were also higher for those with both pre-school and school age children. Thirty nine per cent of this group paid more than £75 per week, compared with 22 per cent with school age children only. Higher levels of manager spent more on childcare than junior managers and professionals (see Appendix 4.5).

In comparing the cost of different forms of childcare, we can examine the range for weekly term-time cost for respondents who have always worked full-time. Nannies appeared to be a relatively expensive form of childcare at £100-£200 (average £140) for live-in and £100-£150 (average £133) for 'live-out' and shared nannies. Childminders were likely to cost £50-£75 per week (average £58), similar to Local Authority nurseries. 'Other' sources - mainly private nurseries and playgroups - worked out at £50-£100 per week. These figures are for a sample containing a mix of children's ages, but with a large group of pre-school children.

4.2.5 Cost of extra domestic help

Respondents were asked how much they spent each week on extra domestic help as a result of being a working mother. This did not emerge as being a significant cost issue when compared with childcare costs. Fifty seven per cent of respondents used no extra domestic help as a result of working, and a further 13 per cent spent £10 or less each week. Senior managers spent rather more than others - 30 per cent spending nothing and 50 per cent spending £10-£30 per week.

4.3 Attitudes to childcare

Having looked at the types of childcare in use and its cost, we now turn to how the respondents felt about childcare issues: whether it was a worry, whether it had affected their career choices, and what forms of assistance with childcare would be most helpful.

4.3.1 Level of anxiety

The respondents were asked how often they found childcare to be a worry. Twenty six per cent said that they had found childcare to be 'not a problem'. Looking at the three quarters who were concerned about it to some extent, only seven per cent found it to be a 'continuous source of worry', 12 per cent worried frequently and 56 per cent worried 'intermittently' about childcare. This, combined with the findings of frequency of childcare change and the later request (Section 4.3.3) for time off when arrangements break down, points employers to a critical role in supporting women at the 'intermittent' times when childcare is causing trouble. This is likely to be when children or carers are ill, or when arrangements are being changed.

Those with only pre-school children were more likely to find childcare 'not a problem' (29 per cent) compared with those with pre-school and school age children (19 per cent) or with school age children only (21 per cent). There was little difference by dependency in those finding childcare a frequent or continuous source of worry (about 19 per cent for each of the three groups).

The public debate and employers' initiatives have tended to concentrate on pre-school children. This study strengthens the case for also examining the childcare needs of working women with children at school.

Allowing for the difference in dependency patterns, there was little difference between part-timers and full-timers in the frequency of their childcare worries. Senior managers were less likely to be frequently or continuously worried (eight per cent compared with 19 per cent overall). We have already seen that they spend more on childcare and also that the ability to organise satisfactory childcare was a less significant factor in their return than for other groups. Perhaps the combination of lower priority and ability to spend make them less prone to anxiety in this area.

There were some differences in anxiety according to the form of childcare used. By and large the commonest sources of childcare were also the most satisfactory - childminders, live-out nannies and partners/family members. The numbers using local authority nurseries or employer nurseries were really too small to draw any conclusions about whether they reduced levels of anxiety. Those using 'other' sources (friends, private nurseries etc) were more likely to find childcare a significant worry.

4.3.2 Impact of childcare on job and career choices

The respondents were asked the extent to which considerations of childcare had affected their job and career choices. The results are shown in Table 4.3. Overall, childcare had a significant effect on the respondents' job and career choices. Twenty seven per cent had not been affected at all, 49 per cent had been affected to some extent and 23 per cent had been affected very significantly. This is rather like the pattern on the question about the worry of childcare. Childcare considerations do not dominate the lives of working mothers - except when arrangements break down - but remain as a background issue exerting a significant effect over time on both stress and career choice.

Table 4.3: Impact of Childcare on Career by Dependency, Employment Status over Time, Job Level and Sector

	Considerations of Childcare affected Career						Total Sample	
	Not at all		To some extent		Very significantly			
Dependency of children	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Pre-school only	152	31	237	48	107	22	496	100
Pre-school + school	25	23	62	56	23	21	110	100
School only	32	20	80	51	46	29	158	100
Older only	2	25	1	13	5	63	8	100
N =	211	27	380	49	181	23	772	100
Employment Status over Time								
Part-time	42	19	108	49	71	32	221	100
Has worked part-time	28	22	65	51	34	27	127	100
Always full-time	136	33	199	49	71	17	406	100
N =	206	27	372	49	176	23	754	100
Level of current job								
Junior professional	22	25	40	45	26	30	88	100
Senior professional	27	18	83	55	42	28	152	100
Junior manager	59	31	97	50	37	19	193	100
Middle manager	74	29	126	50	54	21	254	100
Senior manager	21	40	25	47	7	13	53	100
N =	203	27	371	50	166	22	740	100
Current Sector								
Finance	69	32	109	51	35	16	213	100
Public	51	22	100	43	83	35	234	100
Manufacturing/energy	51	28	96	52	36	20	183	100
Retail/services	39	29	72	53	25	18	136	100
N =	210	27	377	49	179	23	766	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2, A6, E1, E2, E4, G2 and H8)

Part-timers, not surprisingly, felt their careers had been more affected than those who had always worked full-time, a third of whom were 'not at all' affected in their choices. However, it is important to recognise that two thirds of full-timers were therefore still affected to some extent, and employers should not ignore this reality.

The small group of senior managers again looked rather different from the rest of the sample, with more who had been 'not at all' affected (40 per cent). Those in the public sector were more likely to have been affected 'very significantly' in their job and career choices, although this may be linked with the variation by dependency. The public sector sample had had their children longer ago, and those with school age children were also more likely to have been 'very significantly' affected. This variation over time is

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interesting. It is impossible to know from this study whether childcare and career issues are really becoming easier, or whether women who have only recently had children simply have not faced the issues for long enough to see as much impact on their career choices.

4.3.3 Childcare enhancements : preferences and availability

Respondents were given a list of possible enhancements to childcare collected from the literature and from the pilot interviews. For each enhancement they were asked to rate its helpfulness (on a scale from very significant (1) to no help at all (4)), and to indicate whether this enhancement was already available to them. The findings for the overall sample are given on Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Enhancements to Childcare Desired and Available

	Helpfulness of enhancements				
Childcare enhancements	Very great help %	Significant help %	Limited help %	No help at all %	Already available %
Information on childcare available	29	29	29	13	23
Employer-run creche	36	15	23	26	6
Provision of nursery or creche near to home	38	24	19	19	15
Tax relief on childcare costs	74	14	6	6	x
Employer assistance with costs (vouchers, for example)	67	18	9	6	3
Time off when arrangements break down	77	18	4	1	18
After school/holiday schemes	56	17	10	17	6

Max N = 782 Min N = 680

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question H9)

Most of the enhancements would be of help to the respondents. Even the lowest rated enhancement - an employer-run creche - would be of significance or very great help to over half the respondents.

Three enhancements came out head and shoulders above the rest:

- time off when arrangements break down (of significant or very great help to 95 per cent of respondents);
- tax relief on childcare (88 per cent);
- employer assistance with costs (85 per cent).

A nursery or creche near home would be of significant help to more people than an employer-run nursery.

In terms of availability of these enhancements, obviously tax relief was not available to anyone. Information on childcare was available to nearly a quarter of participants, and employer-run creches to only six per cent (concentrated in finance and public sectors). Employer assistance with costs - one of the most desired enhancements - was available to only three per cent of respondents, 16 individuals in the public sector and seven in finance, and only one or two in the other sectors. Time off when arrangements break down was available to 18 per cent, with a more even sector spread. After school and holiday schemes were only available to 6 per cent, like employer-run creches mainly in the public sector and finance.

The most obvious gap to be filled is between the large proportion desiring emergency time off and the comparatively small proportion who had this available. The other major gap is in the area of assistance with costs, either through the state or through the employer, which is obviously a more difficult issue for employers than time off.

One might expect that current age of children would influence the perceived value of various enhancements. In practice, an employer-run creche was more attractive to those with only pre-school children (58 per cent very great or significant help), although this still does not place it very high on the list (Appendix 4.6). Tax relief on childcare was important to every group, but especially to those with both pre-school and school age children (94 per cent of significant or very great help) who bear the highest cost burden. Emergency time off was also universally valued, but again had the highest scores from those with very young children. Interestingly, time-off and holiday schemes were as likely to be mentioned by those with very young children as those with only school age children. Perhaps those with young children were already looking ahead and becoming aware of the problems of childcare in the school years.

Those who had only had one break were more likely to value information on childcare, an employer-run creche and a nursery or creche near home (Appendix 4.6). Those who had taken more than one break tended to emphasise help with costs rather more.

Managers and professionals had similar preferences for childcare enhancements; although managers had rather better access to enhancements, these differences were mainly small (Appendix 4.7). One area of difference which did emerge was in the availability of time off when arrangements break down. Twenty one per cent of managers felt they had access to this benefit compared with 11 per cent of professionals.

4.4 Summary

- The most common forms of childcare used by the sample were partners/family members, childminders and nannies (mainly 'live-out'). Very few indeed used local authority nurseries or those provided by or supported by employers (each about 2 per cent of the sample).
- About 12 per cent saw their partner as a 'form of childcare' but three-quarters relied on their partners at least occasionally to help with childcare while they were at work. A third relied on their partner's help regularly or every working day. Employers should consider the part played by their male employees in childcare, and not assume that only female employees have these calls upon their time and energy.
- Childcare arrangements changed frequently even for those with children of school age only. Women cannot 'solve' their childcare problem with any permanence, and employers need to recognise this reality.
- About 10 per cent of the sample obtained childcare without paying for it. The average weekly childcare bill for full-timers who paid for their care was £85. The average weekly cost for particular types of care was: £140 for a live-in nanny, £133 for a 'live-out' or shared nanny, £58 for a childminder.
- Childcare was a source of worry to three-quarters of the sample, although most often it was only an intermittent worry (56 per cent). This points to a key role for employers in supporting women at times when childcare arrangements are changing or break down (eg through illness of child or carer). Those with school aged children were just as concerned as those with younger children only. By and large the commonest forms of childcare (partners/family, childminders, live-out nannies) were also the most satisfactory.
- Considerations of childcare had affected the respondents' career choices: a quarter significantly plus a half to some extent. The senior managers were less likely to think their career choices had been affected by childcare considerations.
- Three enhancements to childcare were clearly seen as of most potential benefit, and they were not currently available to many. They were: time off when arrangements break down (desired by 95 per cent, available to 18 per cent), tax relief on childcare costs (desired by 88 per cent, available to none) and employer assistance with costs (desired by 85 per cent and available to 3 per cent).
- For the women in this study, childcare emerged as an issue always at the background of their working lives. It usually involved considerable cost and flared up in periods of intermittent worry when arrangements broke down. However, they were expected to deal with the cost and unreliability of childcare in the UK with very little support, even from their employers.

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Chapter Five : Employment and career progression

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Two has already presented a brief overview of the patterns of employment of the respondents by sector, function and job level. We have also looked at their breakdown by employment status (full- and part-time) in their current jobs and over time. In this chapter we address the second main objective of the study: to discover the career patterns of the women in the period since their career break.

We look in more detail at a number of aspects of employment and career progression for the sample. We look both at experience since recent break and, for those who have taken more than one break, at their experiences since the birth of their first child.

We begin by looking at the patterns of part-time working among the sample (Section 5.2). This forms the factual backcloth against which attitudes to part-time working will later be examined (Chapter Six). The following section (5.3) reports on the total time spent by the respondents on their work duties - an important issue for women also trying to care for children. Section 5.4 examines the job changes experienced by women at the time of their return, and specifically looks at whether they experienced the downward mobility typical of women returners as a whole (Dex 1987). The final two sections presenting results look at job changes since the recent break (Section 5.5) and job changes since first break for those who had taken more than one break (Section 5.6).

5.2 Patterns of part-time working

We have already noted (Table 2.6) that two thirds of the respondents were working full-time, 29 per cent part-time and/or job-sharing, and the remainder were on a career break. This was a higher rate of part-time working than we had expected in women of high occupational status working for large employers. However, national figures in 1989 showed 28 per cent of female managers and professionals as working part-time (Department of Employment, 1990). What then were some of the influences on the respondents' current job status?

5.2.1 Dependency of children

Research on women's employment patterns shows that the key factors influencing whether women work full- or part-time are the age of their youngest child and the stage in their life cycle rather than, for instance, the number of children they have or the women's age (Martin and Roberts 1984). In 1989, 51 per cent of employed married women worked part-time. However, the rate of part-time working was as high as 70 per cent for those with youngest children under five (Department of Employment, 1990). Similar trends were exhibited in the employment patterns of the women in this study, although the proportions working part-time were obviously much lower than for the female workforce as a whole.

Of those women employed part-time, the vast majority (89 per cent) had at least one child of pre-school age but only two per cent had children over 19. By contrast, women with a child and/or children at school were most likely to work full-time (Table 5.1). Of those with children at school but none still pre-school, 82 per cent worked full-time. However, the number of children the women had did not affect their employment status.

Table 5.1: Current Employment Status by Dependency of Children

Current employment status	Dependency of Children								Total Sample	
	Pre-school only		Pre-school + school		School only		Older Only			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Full-time	316	63	62	56	131	82	7	64	516	66
Part-time	138	27	29	26	17	11	4	36	188	24
Job-sharing	16	3	11	10	9	6	0	0	36	5
Self-employed	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	0
Career break	32	6	7	6	1	1	0	0	40	5
N =	502	100	110	100	159	100	11	100	782	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6 and E1)

Although the presence of pre-school age children is important in explaining which women are most likely to work part-time, it cannot be assumed that all or most women with pre-school age children work part-time. Indeed, 63 per cent of the women surveyed with only pre-school children worked full-time. This points to the continuing trend for women to return to full-time employment prior to their youngest child entering compulsory education.

5.2.2 Job level

Women who classified themselves as managers were much more likely to work full-time compared with those who defined their jobs as professional (74 per cent compared to 55 per cent) (Table 5.2). This tendency was particularly strong among managerial women at senior levels (of whom 89 per cent worked full-time).

Table 5.2: Current Employment Status by Job Level

Current employment status	Level of Current Job										Total Sample	
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Full-time	49	54	85	55	136	70	188	73	48	89	506	67
Part-time	29	32	60	39	36	19	46	18	3	6	174	23
Job sharing	8	9	6	4	7	4	11	4	0	0	32	4
Self-employed	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Career break	3	3	3	2	4	7	14	3	3	6	37	5
N =	90	100	155	100	193	100	259	100	54	100	751	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1 and E4)

We cannot tell, of course, whether the incidence of part-time working falls with increased status because of choice or because of the lower availability of part-time employment for managers, especially at senior levels. The research literature leads us to believe that employers are very strongly opposed to part-time working for managers (Hirsh and Jackson, 1990). Against this backcloth, the 20 per cent of managers working part-time was higher than we expected.

As shown in Appendix 2.3, some 16 per cent of managers had also worked part-time at some time in the past, but subsequently returned to full-time work. Of course they may have done this while working at lower levels, but the assumption that all female managers must always have worked full-time is not supported by this sample.

5.2.3 Sector

The industrial sector the women worked in made only a slight difference to the overall distribution of full and part-timers, with more women in finance working full-time and more public sector employees working part-time and/or job-sharing.

5.2.4 Function

The incidence of part-time working was higher in IT (37 per cent), personnel (30 per cent) and administration (27 per cent) than in sales and marketing (13 per cent) and finance (18 per cent).

5.2.5 Length of Time in Work since Career Break

Other factors that had some bearing on the women's current employment status were how long they had been in work since their most recent break and the length of that break.

In Chapter Three we examined the relationship between length of break and time at work since break and employment status. The proportion of women working full-time rose the longer they had been back in work while the proportion working part-time fell (Table 3.2). This fall was particularly marked after one year of being back at work. In addition, where the break was under 12 months its duration was a strong indicator of current employment status. Thus the shorter the break, the greater the likelihood of the women returning to a full-time job (Table 3.3).

These findings suggest that for some women part-time work was just a temporary phase in their work career, using part-time work as a stepping stone for returning to full-time employment. Indeed, some career break schemes make explicit provision for women to return to work initially on a part-time basis to ease them back into full-time work.

5.3 Working hours

5.3.1 Contractual Hours

The respondents employed full-time were contracted to worked an average of 36.5 hours a week while their part-time colleagues averaged 20.4 hours.

The contractual hours of the full-timers reflect the national average but part-timers worked above the national average which was 17.8 hours in 1990

(Marsh 1991). This can be explained primarily by the fact that the women in our survey tended to worked in those sectors with above average part-time hours such as banking, manufacturing, and certain parts of the public sector, for instance health.

Given the diverse national picture, there were also sectoral differences in contractual hours among the women in our study. Full-timers in the retail/service sectors worked the longest average hours (38.4) while those in finance worked the shortest (35.2). The pattern amongst part-timers was different again. Women in manufacturing/energy worked the longest (22.6) and those in the public sector the shortest (19).

Senior managers had to work the longest hours irrespective of their employment status while junior managers worked the shortest full-time hours and junior professionals the shortest part-time hours.

For the vast majority (90 per cent) their working hours remained constant throughout the year. With the exception of the school teachers in the sample, term-time working was very unusual.

5.3.2 Unpaid Overtime

On top of these contractual hours of work, in a typical working week, 59 per cent of the women spent additional time on unpaid overtime at their workplace and 53 per cent undertook unpaid overtime at home. On average they spent more hours working overtime at their workplace than at home.

The women working the longest overtime both at the workplace and at home were in full-time employment. Full-timers spent an average of 3.5 hours at the workplace while part-timers spent 1.1 hours, and overtime spent at home averaged 2.8 hours and 1.2 hours respectively.

Women in senior management posts worked the most overtime both at work and at home. Those in full-time work averaged 5.4 hours at work and 4.3 hours at home while part-timers averaged 3 and 2.3 hours respectively.

Women employed full-time in the finance sector and part-time in the public sector worked the longest overtime at work (four hours and 1.5 hours respectively) but both full and part-timers in the public sector worked the most overtime at home (four and 1.6 hours respectively).

Irrespective of whether the women were working full- or part-time those that did the least overtime both at the workplace and at home had pre-school children while those who did the most had children over the age of 19. This trend was particularly marked for part-timers. Those with older children did nearly six times as much overtime as their colleagues with very young children.

5.3.3 Travel to Work

The women's travel time to work ranged from one to 21 hours each week, averaging 5.7 hours for full-timers. Irrespective of employment status, women in managerial jobs had longer journeys to work than professional women while the longest travelling times were experienced by senior managers (seven hours and over). There were, however, considerable variations in these patterns depending on sector.

5.3.4 Nights Away from Home for Work

Two out of five women spent nights away from home for work. Over half of these women spent more than one night a month away while the average number was 3.5 nights. Once again women working full-time were more likely than part-timers to have to spend time away from home, as were senior managers.

5.3.5 Total working hours

The majority of women surveyed spent considerably more than their contractual hours of employment on work related activities. This is significant, especially for full-timers, as it reduced their effective time at home to a large extent. Although full-timers were contracted to work an average of 36.5 hours a week, they spent an average of 48.5 hours a week on work-related activities, excluding nights spent away from home. For senior managers the demands were greater. This amount of input was bound to constrain time available for their children, themselves, partner, social life and household chores. Little wonder that the comments made by the sample in the open questions (Chapter Seven) reflected feeling tired and short of time. Perhaps little wonder also that a significant group saw part-time working as a means of making the demands on their time more realistic (Chapter Six).

5.4 Employment on return from the break

Evidence from the Women and Employment survey shows that childbirth is the single biggest cause of women's occupational downgrading: 40-45 per cent occurred after childbirth and 25 per cent between the last job before childbirth and the first job after the first return (Dex 1987). Other research also shows that most of the downward mobility occurs after the first break in employment due to childbirth (Chaney 1981). The risk of downward mobility increases if women return to part-time employment and if they return to work after a long period of time. It is important to assess, therefore, how the women in our survey fared on their return to work immediately after their career breaks.

Data were collected on the jobs women returned to after their recent break. For the 505 women (65 per cent of the total sample) for whom their recent break was also their first break, we can look at experience of employment on return from a first career break.

5.4.1 Returning to the Same Job

Over half (54 per cent) of all respondents regained their previous job on returning to work after their most recent career break. The figure was 52 per cent for those for whom this recent break was also their first break, compared with 57 per cent for those returning from second or subsequent breaks.

Table 5.3 shows the proportion of respondents returning to the same job, broken down by number of breaks and employment status over time. Allowing for employment status, job change was more likely after the first break, although the differences were not very large. There was a more pronounced difference according to employment status. Those working part-time at the time of the survey, and also those who had worked part-time previously, were less likely to return to their previous job than those who had always worked full-time. This is perhaps not surprising. Indeed, some may have chosen to change job in order to work part-time.

Table 5.3: Returning to the Same Job

	One and more than one breaks				Total	
	One break		More than one break			
After recent break returned to same job	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	261	52	156	57	417	54
No	241	48	117	43	358	46
N =	502	100	273	100	775	100
Returned to same job by employment status over time						
Part-time (N = 224)	57	40	41	49	98	44
Has worked part-time (N = 124)	30	41	25	50	55	44
Always full-time (N = 414)	170	60	86	66	256	62
N =	498		264		762	

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B1, E1, G2 and F4)

The probability of returning to the same job was greater, the shorter the break. Women currently in senior professional jobs were the least likely to have changed jobs on return from their recent break.

5.4.2 Returning to a Different Job

Although over half the sample returned to the same job after their most recent break, that still leaves a substantial minority for whom taking a break also meant changing job. Of those taking their first break, 48 per cent returned to a different job. For those on subsequent breaks, 43 per cent did so.

If we look more closely at the women who returned to a different job (N = 358), Table 5.4 shows that of these about a third (31 per cent) changed function on return, again rather more on first break than subsequent breaks.

Table 5.4: Returning to a Different Job

	One and more than one breaks				Total Sample	
	One break		More than one break			
Same function as previously for job changers	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	160	67	83	54	243	68
No	79	33	32	28	111	31
N =	239	100	115	100	354	100
Level compared with previous job for job changers						
Lower	58	24	15	13	73	20
Same	146	61	83	71	229	64
Higher	37	15	18	15	55	15
N =	241	100	116	100	357	100
Level compared with previous job for total sample						
Lower	58	12	15	6	73	9
Same	407	81	239	88	646	84
Higher	37	7	18	6	55	7
N =	502	100	272	100	774	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B1 and F4)

Of the same group, most returned to a job at the same level as their previous job (64 per cent), 15 per cent came back to a job at a higher level and 20 per cent to a lower level job. Twenty four per cent of those returning to a different job after a first break came back at a lower level.

If we take into account those who came back to the same job (presumably at the same level) we can say that 84 per cent of the sample as a whole returned after the break at the same job level (Table 5.4 - 'total sample'). Nine per cent returned at a lower level and 7 per cent at a higher level than before the break.

Women who had always worked full-time were the most likely to have been promoted and the least likely to have been demoted. Women currently in middle management jobs experienced the most movement (up and down) on return from their breaks. We might expect that those experiencing downward mobility on return to work after their first break would have taken longer breaks, but

Appendix 5.1 does not show this conclusively. However, we have already noted that few of the respondents in this sample had taken very long breaks.

Taken as a whole, this study shows a lower level of downward mobility than we might have expected to see (Dex 1987, Chaney 1981), although the differences according to number of breaks and employment status are in the expected directions. One can only hazard the guess that the relatively high employment status of the sample and the size and sophistication of their employers, coupled with the fact they returned to the same employers, protected them in large measure from downward mobility.

However we should not overlook the fact that nearly half the sample did return to a different job after their break. Many women, therefore, had to deal with a new job at the same time as dealing with their changed family circumstances, their return to work, organising childcare and so on. This situation may give women distinctive developmental needs at the time of their return (Gallos 1989).

5.5 Job changes since recent career break

We have seen that the sample mainly retained their previous level of job on return. But were they able to progress their careers subsequent to this? What other kinds of job moves, in addition to possible promotions, were they making?

In this section we look at all the women in the survey and how their careers progressed during the period from their most recent career break until the time the survey was conducted. This was an average period of two years seven months, rather a short time over which to draw firm conclusions. The survey asked about number of job changes over this period (Q F5) classified into job changes at the same level (which we will call lateral moves), changes of function and moves to a higher level (which we will call promotions). We will look at these moves both in crude terms of how many women experienced them at all, and then examine how many times such moves had occurred. Our main interest here is in looking at differences by employment status and level, bearing in mind that groups had been back at work for different periods of time.

Table 5.5 summarises the main patterns of whether the sample had experienced a particular type of move at all. The classification of managers and professionals in this table is based on their job levels at the start of their recent break.

Table 5.5: Number Making a Job Move since Recent Break

	Making lateral moves			Making functional moves			Making promotional moves		
Employment status over time	**No**	**%**	**N**	**No**	**%**	**N**	**No**	**%**	**N**
Part-time	38	18	209	38	18	206	30	15	203
Has been part-time	50	44	114	51	47	108	48	41	116
Always full-time	107	29	371	109	30	361	152	40	376
Job level at recent break									
Managers	123	29	430	119	28	423	142	32	437
Professionals	62	25	247	71	29	248	83	32	256
Total Sample	199	28	709	204	29	702	237	33	724

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F5, E1, G2 and F1)

5.5.1 Lateral moves

Twenty eight per cent of all respondents had changed jobs at the same level since returning to work. The majority of these (70 per cent) had changed their job once and a further 18 per cent twice. Of those who had one such job change, a half had changed within two years of returning to work and three-quarters within four years.

Full-timers were more likely to have made a lateral move than those who were working part-time, but previous part-timers were the most likely to have made this type of move. Those who were managers at the start of the break were a little more likely to have made lateral moves than professionals, with women in middle management the most likely to have made such moves.

The amount of lateral movement was also increased, not surprisingly, by the time at work since taking a break, and by taking breaks over a year long. Women in public sector jobs were the most likely to have made lateral moves.

5.5.2 Functional moves

Two hundred and four women (29 per cent) had switched their job function since their most recent career break (Table 5.5). Nearly three-quarters (74 per cent) of them had experienced this once and a further 17 per cent twice. Only 0.6 per cent of women attained the maximum number of moves which was four.

Of the women who had changed their job function once, a half had achieved this within two years of being back in work after their break and three-quarters within five years. Half of the women experiencing two changes had achieved this within four years of returning to work and three-quarters within eight years.

The women's past employment status had some bearing on whether or not they had experienced a functional move. Women who worked part-time at the time of the survey were the least likely to move functions (18 per cent compared with 30 per cent for full-timers). Appendix 5.2 shows the mean number of moves for those who had moved at least once. This shows that part-timers who had moved function were also likely to have done this somewhat fewer times than either full-timers or those who had worked part-time in the past.

Not surprisingly, functional movement was higher for those who had been back at work for longer. For these reasons, Appendix 5.2 shows the relationship between employment status over time and time back at work and job level. If we control for time back since recent break, part-timers were still less likely to have made a functional move, but the differences are much reduced.

Overall, women in managerial jobs at the time of the survey, especially middle managers, were more likely to make functional moves than those in professional jobs. However, if we examine job level at the time of taking the break (as in Table 5.5), managers and professionals had a similar chance of functional movement.

The women experiencing the most changes had been working either in sales and marketing or in finance, and had tended to switch into administration and personnel.

5.5.3 Promotion

A third of the sample (237 individuals) had been promoted since their most recent career break (Table 5.5). Of these 78 per cent had been promoted once and a further 13 per cent twice. Only four (0.6 per cent) women had been promoted five times since their return which was the maximum number recorded.

Of those who had been promoted once, a half had achieved this within three years of returning to work and three quarters within five years. A half of the women who had gained two promotions accomplished this within five years of being back in work after their break and three quarters within seven years. Thus, not surprisingly, it took most women a little longer to be promoted than to change job functions.

Employment status over time had an important impact on promotion prospects (Table 5.5). The most marked difference was between women who worked part-time and those who had always worked full-time or had worked part-time in the past. The first group were much less likely to have climbed up the career ladder (only 15 per cent had been promoted at all) compared with the other two groups (40 per cent and 41 per cent respectively). Moreover, the part-timers had been promoted fewer times (Appendix 5.3). These findings reinforce both the belief and the reality that part-time employment can damage promotion prospects and can interrupt career progression in the short term.

Of course the part-timers had been back at work for less time, and this could in part explain their relative lack of promotion. Appendix 5.3 illustrates the interplay between promotions, employment status and time back in employment. This still shows a substantial difference between part-timers and full-timers in the proportion being promoted at all, even correcting for time back at work, especially among those who had been back at work for more than a year. For example, 46 per cent of full-timers who had been back for between one and five years had been promoted at least once, compared with only 20 per cent of part-timers. Those part-timers who had been promoted had also received fewer promotions than full-timers. The sample of women who had been back at work for more than five years was too small to test this difference remains for 'long-term' part-timers.

The more optimistic finding is that those who had worked part-time but since returned to full-time work seemed to regain a considerable amount (but not all) of that lost ground. For example 35 per cent of previous part-timers who had been back for between one and five years had been promoted compared with 46 per cent of those who had always worked full-time.

Given the impact of time back at work on promotions, it is not surprising that the percentage who had received at least one promotion rose with decreasing dependency. Only 23 per cent of respondents with only pre-school children had been promoted, compared with 27 per cent of those with both pre-school and school age children, and 64 per cent of those with only school aged children.

The women most likely to have been promoted were in managerial rather than professional jobs at the time of the survey. Women in higher level managerial jobs were also much more likely to have been promoted than their junior colleagues. In particular, 57 per cent of senior managers had been promoted compared to 43 per cent of middle managers, 25 per cent of both junior managers and senior professionals and 20 per cent of junior professionals. But senior managers had also been back at work for longer.

However, if we look at job level at the time of the break (as in Table 5.5), managers and professionals had a similar chance of promotion.

Another way of looking at the women's career progression is to look at the changes in broad job level between the jobs held prior to the recent break, and at the time of the survey (comparing questions F3 and E4) as in Table 5.6. Just over three-quarters of respondents were already in their current job level at the time of their most recent break. The proportions who had not changed broad job level at all were higher for the lower levels (89 per cent of junior professionals, 83 per cent senior professionals, 80 per cent junior managers) than for the senior levels (71 per cent middle managers and 57 per cent senior managers). This is likely to be in part a consequence of short times back at work, especially for more junior staff, but at least shows that not all senior managers have to attain their positions before having children - 43 per cent had been promoted into this level since their recent break.

Table 5.6: Changes in Job Level since Recent Break

Job level at start of recent break	Level of Current Job										N
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Junior Prof	75	89	17	11	13	7	7	3	4	8	116
Senior Prof	4	5	127	83	19	10	7	3	2	4	159
Junior Manager	4	5	4	3	152	80	58	23	2	4	220
Middle Manager	1	1	5	3	6	3	182	71	15	28	209
Senior Manager	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	1	30	57	33
N =	84	100	153	100	191	100	256	100	53	100	737

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E4 and F3)

However, if we look at where managers are being promoted from, we see an interesting pattern. Most of those who had been promoted into senior management since their recent break were already middle managers before that break. Indeed 90 per cent of all the managers at the time of the survey (all but 52 individuals) had already been in management positions at the start of their recent break. This could, of course, reflect the relatively short time they had been back at work.

5.6 Job changes since first career break

For the thirty five per cent of respondents (274 individuals) who had taken more than one break, we have additional data on their job level at the time of their first break (Q F6) and their job moves over the total period since the first break (Q F7). The following analysis applies to job changes since first break for this sub-sample and allows us to look at job change over a longer period of time. It covers the period from these women's first career break until the time of the survey, an average of 4.9 years of which some 3.7 years were spent in employment.

5.6.1 Change of Employer

A very small proportion (12 per cent) of this group of women had changed employers over this period of time and an insignificant number (10 individuals) had changed employer specifically to move to a higher level job.

This level of employment stability is somewhat greater than might otherwise be expected from other research on managerial women's job change (Nicholson and West 1988, Alban-Metcalfe and West 1991). For instance, Nicholson and West's (1988) study showed that three years was the average job tenure for male and female managers but women were more likely to change employers and to make radical moves outwards and upwards. Women, unlike men, kept up a high rate of employer-changing throughout their careers, especially those with children.

The women in our study did not exhibit the same employer-changing tendencies found elsewhere. The differences can probably be attributed to the nature of the sample in our study. The women we surveyed were selected because they had returned to their previous employer after their career break and so may be unrepresentative of returners as a whole. They primarily worked in large employing organisations which may have had clear hierarchical and promotion structures, unlike the women in Nicholson and West's study. Consequently, their motivation to change employers may not have been as great because they were likely to have better opportunities inside their current employers.

The type of job move most frequently reported was a job change at the same level affecting 181 women (71 per cent), followed by promotion to a higher level job experienced by 160 women (60 per cent) and finally a change in function impacting on 131 women (52 per cent).

5.6.2 Lateral moves

Turning first to the 181 women (66 per cent of this group) who had moved to another job which was at the same level. Forty six per cent of them had moved once, 30 per cent twice and 10 per cent three times. Over half of those women experiencing one or two changes had accomplished this within three years of returning to work after their first break and ninety per cent within ten years.

Whether or not women experienced this type of change seemed unrelated to the length of time they had been away from work, how many career breaks they had taken and their job level. However, women who had always worked full-time were less likely than those who had been employed part-time to have moved laterally.

5.6.3 Functional moves

Table 5.7 shows those making at least one functional or promotion move since their first break by employment status over time and job level at the start of their first break. Fifty three per cent of this sub-sample had changed function. Of these, roughly an equal proportion had changed their function either once (41 per cent) or twice (38 per cent) and only 1.2 per cent had experienced the maximum number of moves which was six.

Table 5.7: Number making a Job Move since First Break

	Making functional moves			Making promotional moves		
Employment status over time	**No**	**%**	**N**	**No**	**%**	**N**
Part-time	37	49	75	31	41	76
Has been part-time	29	60	48	28	58	48
Full-time	62	53	118	92	72	127
Job level at time of first break						
Managers	63	53	119	73	59	123
Professionals	60	51	117	76	61	124
Total Sample	178	53	241	151	60	251

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F7, E1, G6 and F6)

Women's past employment status had a modest impact on job function change (Table 5.7). Those that had only worked full-time were less likely to have altered their function (53 per cent) compared to those who used to work part-time (60 per cent). Of those working part-time at the time of the survey, 49 per cent had made a functional move.

Women who were managers at the time of the first break were a little more likely than professionals to have made a functional move over the period since that break (53 per cent managers, 51 per cent professionals).

5.6.4 Promotions

Some 151 women had been promoted since their first career break which represented 60 per cent of women who had taken more than one career break. Two thirds of these women had received one promotion, one in five two, and the remaining 14 per cent three or more.

The women's age did not have any consistent impact on their career progression. Nor did their educational backgrounds have a predictable effect on their chances of promotion. Also perhaps surprisingly, possessing a professional qualification was no particular advantage in terms of advancement.

Of those women who had been promoted once, just under a half (47 per cent) had achieved this within three years of returning to employment after their first break and nearly two-thirds within four years. Of the women experiencing two promotions, the majority (44 per cent) had attained this within four years of returning and a further quarter between five to ten years. Length of time back at work was clearly associated with chance of promotion.

Women who had taken career breaks of less than one year had a higher chance of promotion in comparison to other women with longer breaks (72 per cent of them had been promoted compared to 33 per cent of those away for five to seven years) but also they were promoted much more frequently. Thus 56 per cent were promoted once and 25 per cent twice whereas all the women who had been away for between five to seven years had been promoted just once.

Employment status over time had a much clearer effect on promotions than on functional moves (Table 5.7). Some 72 per cent of women who had only worked full-time had been promoted since their first break compared to 58 per cent of ex-part-timers and 41 per cent of part-timers. Taking length of time back at work into account still showed part-timers less likely to have been promoted (eg 41 per cent of part-timers back one to five years had been promoted compared to 68 per cent full-timers). However, the number of promotions obtained by those who did move did not vary much by employment status when allowing for length of time back at work (Appendix 5.5). The small number of previously part-time respondents in this category did not point clearly to the career recovery mentioned above.

Women in managerial posts at the time of the survey were more likely than those in professional jobs to have experienced some type of promotion since their first break and to have moved more frequently. In particular, a higher proportion of middle managers were upwardly mobile than any other group. Hence 80 per cent of them had been promoted compared to 73 per cent of senior managers, and 54 per cent of junior managers. However, senior managers moved more frequently than their middle manager colleagues. Some 58 per cent had been promoted more than once compared to 34 per cent of middle managers. Once again, in part these difference in upward mobility can be explained by the length of time the women in the various job levels had been back in work. Those who had been back the longest had greater chances of promotion and these women were concentrated in the higher managerial levels.

However, if we look at job level at the time of the first career break (as in Table 5.7) there is little apparent difference in the promotion rate of managers and professionals.

As before, we can also look at the changes in broad job level for this sub-group between their first break and the time of the survey (comparing questions F6 and E4) as in Table 5.8. This shows considerably more movement between broad job levels than the shorter period since the most recent break. Of the small number of junior professionals (26) in this sub-sample, nearly all had been at this level at the time of their first break. However, only 59 per cent of senior professionals, 56 per cent of junior managers and 37 per cent of middle managers had been at those levels at the time of their first break. Of the small number of senior managers in this sub-sample (26), only 23 per cent had been at this level at the time of their first break with the others being promoted over the period of time since that break.

Table 5.8: Changes in Job Level since First Break

Job level at start of first break	Level of Current Job										N
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager		
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Junior Prof	26	96	20	36	16	26	12	14	4	15	78
Senior Prof	-	-	33	59	6	10	5	6	4	15	48
Junior Manager	-	-	2	4	34	56	37	44	3	12	76
Middle Manager	1	4	1	2	4	7	31	37	9	35	46
Senior Manager	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	6	23	7
N =	27	100	56	100	61	100	85	100	26	100	255

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E4 and F6

However, if we look at where these managers were at the time of their first break, we see a similar pattern to that already noted for the first break.

Over this longer period of time, those senior managers who had been promoted since their first break were likely to have already been in management at the time of their first break. Indeed, of the total of 172 managers in this sub-sample, 73 per cent (that is all but 47) had already been in management at the time of their first break. This seems to reinforce the view that the managers in this study had mainly secured a management position before they had children. Although some of those in the sample (eg some in retail and financial management) may have moved into management roles without working as 'professionals', it is still the case that many managers progress from a professional role to a managerial role. The results therefore hint that it is difficult for working mothers to make the transition from professional to manager, although we cannot be sure why this is this case.

These results in general show that there is indeed career progression 'beyond the break' for those who stick with it, although part-timers fared less well than full-timers.

The career experiences of the women in our survey were quite different from those of women in much of the existing literature on women's mobility within the labour market (Dex 1987, Chaney 1981) both in terms of their position immediately after returning to employment and subsequent career progression. These differences may be largely explained by the fact that our sample was atypical of working women as a whole and for that reason is particularly interesting. The particular features of this sample included: the women's occupations (managers and professionals); the high proportion working full-time; the nature of their employing organisations; the relatively short periods of time they spent away from employment. Finally, these women had probably increased their chances of upward mobility by staying with their pre-birth employer - a finding confirmed elsewhere (Brannen and Moss 1991).

5.7 Summary

This chapter has examined patterns of part-time working and working hours, and the job moves made on returning to work and subsequently. The main points emerging were as follows:

Patterns of part-time working

- 89 per cent of those working part-time had at least one child of pre-school age, but the majority of those with only pre-school children (63 per cent) were still working full-time. By the time all children were at school 82 per cent were working full-time.
- Managers were much more likely to be working full-time (74 per cent) than professionals (55 per cent), but an additional 16 per cent of managers had worked part-time at some time in the past. 89 per cent of senor managers were full-time.

Working hours

- The full-time respondents were contracted to work an average of 36.5 hours per week, but averaged 48.5 hours a week on work-related activities (including overtime and travel to work). This figure excludes the average of over three nights a month they stayed away from home.
- Those with pre-school children worked less overtime. Not surprisingly, senior managers worked the longest hours, the most overtime and spent the most time travelling.

Employment on return from the break

- 54 per cent returned to the same job after their recent break. Of those who returned to a different job, a third changed function. 64 per cent of job changers came back at the same level, 15 per cent at a higher level and 20 per cent at a lower level. 24 per cent of those who returned to a different job after their first break came back at a lower level. If we take into account those who retained their job, only 9 per cent of the sample came back to a lower level job (nearly matched by the 7 per cent promoted).

Job changes since the break

- In the average of 2 years 7 months since their most recent break, job moves had been experienced at least once: lateral moves (by 28 per cent of all respondents), functional moves (by 29 per cent) and promotions (by 33 per cent).

- **Employment status over time had a significant bearing on the chance of promotion. 40 per cent of full-timers had been promoted since their recent break compared with 15 per cent of part-timers. The gap narrows somewhat but still remains wide if we take into account the length of time the respondents had been back at work. For example, 46 per cent of full-timers who had been back for between one and five years had been promoted compared with 20 per cent of part-timers. Those who had previously worked part-time and returned to full-time work seemed to have made up some ground.**

- Over three-quarters of respondents were in the same broad job level at the time of the survey that they had been in before their break, although 43 per cent of senior managers had been promoted into this level since their break (mostly from middle management). Of all the managers, 90 per cent had already been in management jobs before their recent break.

Job changes since first break

- For the subset of 274 respondents who had taken more than one break, we can examine their career progression over the longer average period of 3.7 years at work (4.9 years in total) since their first break.

- Among this group, the following types of job moves had been experienced at least once: change of employer (experienced by 12 per cent), lateral moves (by 66 per cent), functional moves (by 53 per cent) and promotions (by 60 per cent). This adds up to a considerable amount of job movement.

- Part-timers in this group also had a lower chance of promotion (41 per cent) compared with those who had always worked full-time (72 per cent). This was not accounted for by differences in time back at work since the first break.

- There was considerable movement between broad job levels over this period for those who had taken more than one break, especially between levels of management. However we see again only limited movement of professionals into management posts. 73 per cent of the managers in this subgroup had already been in management positions before the birth of their first child.

Overall, these findings give quite an optimistic picture of career experience 'beyond the break' for this sample of women returning to their previous employers. There was less downward mobility experienced than in the population of working women as a whole, and a considerable amount of lateral, functional and promotion moves over relatively short periods of time back at work. There is, however, clear evidence that part-timers were promoted less than full-timers. Most of the managers in the sample had also attained a management post prior to having their first child, although a good many had then been subsequently promoted to higher level management jobs.

Chapter Six : Flexible and part-time working

6.1 Introduction

We have already seen that nearly half the sample in this study had worked part-time (including job-sharing) either currently (29 per cent) or previously (17 per cent). We have also seen that part-timers were promoted less than full-timers in the years since their return to work (Chapter Five).

We have also seen that other forms of work flexibility were sought as a means of easing the difficulties of combining work with family. For example, time off when childcare arrangements break down was the most desired enhancement to childcare for the sample (Section 4.3.3), although only available to a few. The ability to fit the job with domestic responsibilities was important to 87 per cent of the sample in deciding to return after their most recent career break. Given the rather erratic demands of professional and managerial jobs (see Chapter Five) and the vulnerability of childcare arrangements, we might expect that some flexibility in organising work would be a central issue for this sample. This has already been emphasised in other studies (McRae and Daniel 1991). Indeed, 58 per cent of respondents who offered advice to employers in this study (Q J4) suggested that they should be more flexible, and 33 per cent suggested more part-time jobs and job-sharing (see Section 7.8).

Some more specific questions on flexible and part-time working were included in the survey, and are covered by this chapter. We look first at the responses to various aspects of flexible working, in terms of availability and helpfulness. In the second section, we look at the attitudes of both part-timers and full-timers to part-time working.

6.2 Flexible working options

6.2.1 Helpfulness and availability of flexible working options

Respondents were asked to rate eight aspects of flexibility in terms of helpfulness in combining their current job with family life, and also in terms of availability since their most recent break. The overall results are shown in Table 6.1. The aspect seen as most helpful was emergency time off for domestic reasons (seen as very helpful by 75 per cent and of some help by a further 18 per cent). This echoes the similar view expressed with reference to childcare (Section 4.3.3). Other forms of flexibility that were highly valued were the timing of the working day or ability to change start and finish times.

Table 6.1: Flexible Working Options

	Helpfulness			Availability			N =
	Very Helpful %	Some Help %	No help/not applicable %	Considerable extent %	Some Extent %	Not at all %	
Timing of the working day (flexitime, for example)	64	22	14	32	33	35	753
Ability to arrive later or leave earlier than standard times	64	24	13	28	43	29	749
Significant formal reduction in working hours	41	20	40	24	12	64	743
Term-time working; school holidays spent away from workplace	30	15	56	7	6	87	737
Ability to work from home	34	27	39	5	24	71	749
Reduction in travel demanded by the job	23	22	56	5	18	77	738
Reduction in the need to stay away from home	22	21	57	7	21	72	717
Emergency time off for domestic reasons	75	18	7	26	58	16	753

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question G1)

Two other aspects were seen as helpful by over 60 per cent - a significant formal reduction in working hours, and the ability to work from home. Term-time working, reduction in travel and reduction in the need to stay away from home were each seen as helpful by rather under half the sample.

On the whole, the availability of flexible working options was lower than demand, although it was heartening to see that the availability was highest for the options seen as most helpful. For example, 84 per cent had some access to emergency time off, but only 26 per cent had this to a considerable extent. If we compare this with the response to the somewhat similar question on time off when childcare arrangements break down (Table 4.4), we see that only

18 per cent of the sample felt that they had access to this. It seems that time off was either on a rather informal footing and/or restricted to serious emergencies (serious illness etc). Other desired options (changes in timing of the day, ability to work from home etc) were also on offer only to a limited extent or perhaps informally.

The biggest gaps between demand and provision were in the area of reduced working hours, term-time working and ability to work from home. However, only a minority of respondents felt that working from home was practical for their kind of work (Chapter Seven).

6.2.2 Variation by group

The patterns of helpfulness and availability were similar for full-timers and part-timers, except in the obvious area of reduced working hours. Only 12 per cent of those who had always worked full-time had access to reduced working hours (only four per cent to a significant extent), whereas 51 per cent would find this helpful (28 per cent very helpful). There was clearly high demand for reduced hours among those currently working full-time.

The dependency of children did not fundamentally change preferences for flexible options, although those with both pre-school and school age children rated more forms of flexibility as very helpful (Appendix 6.1). We have already seen (Chapter Four) that this is the group with the most problems in cost and provision of childcare, and the most acute tension between home and work. Women in this group therefore have the most to gain from a period in their careers when more flexibility is offered in the workplace. Options geared towards making work easier for those with school age children (flexible hours and term-time working) were more popular among those with both pre-school and school age children than among those with only school age children.

Women in different sectors had by and large the same preferences for flexible working, but availability did vary. Those in the public sector fared better in some areas of provision (see Appendix 6.2) as noted in other studies (McRae and Daniel 1991). Public sector respondents had the most access to emergency time off, but not by a large margin. They also had the most access to flexible working hours, but other sectors had this 'to some extent'. Obviously, access to term-time working in the public sector was influenced by the school teachers in the sample. However, across the full range of options, sectoral differences were not very strong. We should remember, though, that the private sector employers in this study may be expected to have better policies than the private sector as a whole.

Managers had less access to reduced working hours (19 per cent to a considerable extent compared with 33 per cent for professionals), and this access was reduced as job level rose. More senior staff were more able to work from home at least to some extent, especially middle and senior managers. Higher status also made it easier to take emergency time off. Twenty three per cent of junior professionals felt they could not take time off at all, compared with 13 per cent of middle managers and seven per cent of senior managers. These findings are much as one might expect. Higher level job holders find it more difficult to reduce the demands of the job, but can use their personal discretion more in how they structure their time.

6.3 Part-time working

We have already examined the pattern of part-time working among the sample. Part-time working was most prevalent in women with pre-school children, although a substantial number of those with school age and older children had worked part-time in the past (Section 2.4.3). Those working part-time had also been back at work for shorter times than the sample as a whole (Section 3.2.3). We must remember, however, that those who work full-time may not necessarily do so out of choice. We already have evidence that many full-timers would rather have reduced working hours (Section 6.2.2), and the demand for part-time work is examined later in this chapter. A rather optimistic finding is that those who work for a period part-time do appear again in the full-time workforce in substantial numbers, and for some this period of part-time work must have been quite short. This concurs with wider research evidence on the return of women to full-time work after periods working part-time. This would tend to indicate that employers who offer part-time working policies may be providing an effective bridge through the early years of motherhood.

Of those who worked part-time currently or at some time in the past, 39 per cent had done so for less than one year. Of those who had worked part-time for more than a year, the average duration of part-time work was 3.6 years. There was little difference between the average length of time in part-time work of those currently working part-time (3.6 years) and those who had worked part-time previously (3.4 years).

6.3.1 Views of part-timers on part-time work

Those who worked part-time or had done so in the past were asked to agree or disagree with some general statements derived from previous research and the pilot interviews. On the downside, part-time working is seen as damaging career opportunities. As shown in Table 6.2, 76 per cent of current or past part-timers felt that part-time working had reduced their career opportunities (44 per cent definitely and 32 per cent to some extent). Eighty one per cent felt they could not further their career without working full-time (57 per cent felt this strongly). The issue of career satisfaction and ambition is dealt with in more detail in the next chapter. Sixty per cent also felt they worked harder than they were rewarded for, although the same might well be true of full-timers (see Chapter Five).

Those who were currently part-time were more pessimistic about the impact of part-time working on their career opportunities. It is interesting, however, that a very high percentage of ex-part-timers felt that they needed to work full-time to further their careers (73 per cent felt this definitely). Those currently working part-time did feel they had 'the best of both worlds' (40 per cent definitely and a further 45 per cent to some extent).

Those in higher level jobs were less pessimistic about career opportunities, perhaps because they contained a higher weighting of women who had worked part-time in the past but now were working full-time again. Thirty six per cent of managers compared with 50 per cent of professionals felt that working part-time had definitely reduced their career opportunities. Seventy two per cent of managers felt their career opportunities had been affected at least to some extent, compared with 80 per cent of professionals.

These perceptions of the impact of part-time working on career opportunities line up with the factual information presented in Chapter Five on the job moves which the respondents had made since their breaks.

Table 6.2: Views of Part-timers on Part-time Work by Employment Status over Time

	Yes definitely 1 %	Yes, to some extent 2 %	I neither agree nor disagree 3 %	Disagree 4 + 5 %	N
Part-time currently or in past					
Working part-time has reduced my career opportunities	44	32	9	15	338
I cannot further my career without working full-time	57	24	9	10	338
I get the best of both worlds	33	44	9	14	337
I enjoy my children but have problems at work	7	28	26	39	337
I work harder than I am rewarded for	30	30	23	17	337
Currently part-time					
Working part-time has reduced my career opportunities	50	35	7	8	216
I cannot further my career without working full-time	49	29	11	11	216
I get the best of both worlds	40	45	7	8	215
I enjoy my children but have problems at work	7	26	25	42	215
I work harder than I am rewarded for	23	31	25	21	215
Part-time in past					
Working part-time has reduced my career opportunities	34	28	12	26	122
I cannot further my career without working full-time	73	15	4	8	122
I get the best of both worlds	21	43	13	23	122
I enjoy my children but have problems at work	7	32	27	34	122
I work harder than I am rewarded for	41	28	20	11	122

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2 and G3)

In spite of the negative feelings about career impact, those who had worked part-time still felt generally positive about the experience. The majority did not agree with the statement that 'I enjoy my children but have problems at work'. Interestingly, those in the public sector felt rather less positive about these aspects of part-time work than those in other sectors, perhaps because they had been at work for longer since having their children. The general evidence, however, seems to point to the conclusion that those who work part-time feel it is worth some career disadvantage to obtain other rewards.

6.3.2 Views of full-timers on part-time work

Is this view echoed when we look at those who work full-time? We already know that part-time working is not an option for many (Section 6.2.2). But would they take this option if it were available? Of those currently working full-time, 30 per cent said they would work part-time or job-share if their employer allowed it, 50 per cent said they would not do so, and 20 per cent were undecided (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3: Views of Full-timers on Part-time work by Employment status over time

	Has been Part-time %	Always Full-time %	Total Full-time %
Would work part-time if allowed:			
Yes	27	31	30
No	57	48	50
Don't know	16	21	20
Work full-time because career would suffer:			
Yes	45	41	42
No	55	59	58
N =	96	400	496

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2, G4 and G5)

Those full-timers who had worked part-time in the past were rather less likely to opt for it again than those who had always worked full-time, perhaps because their children were older. Some rough calculations show that if those in the sample who said they would work part-time actually took up this option, in addition to those already working part-time, then the proportion of the total sample in part-time work would be 49 per cent. This figure excludes the substantial number who were undecided.

Of course, we need to remember that this population is heavily weighted with women who had pre-school children (78 per cent), and therefore we might expect this figure to be higher than for working professional and managerial mothers as a whole. Appendix 6.3 shows how attitudes vary by dependency of children. As expected, the proportion of full-time women with school age children who would work part-time if allowed was lower (16 per cent) than that for those with pre-school children only (38 per cent) or pre-school and school age children (33 per cent).

However, the figures from this study do indicate that at least 58 per cent of professional and managerial women might opt for part-time working at some stage in their career if this option were available. This is a serious indication by working mothers of the importance to them of the part-time working option.

However, the full-timers also believe that working part-time damages career opportunities. Forty two per cent of those currently working full-time said they only did so because their careers would suffer if they worked part-time. This is not a majority, but it is a rather important minority. Presumably for many of these, part-time working would involve a change of job and/or of employer, as for the majority reduced hours is not an option in their current job.

The interaction between preference for part-time working (Q G4) and discouragement on grounds of career impact (Q G5) is shown in Appendix 6.4. Of the 509 full-time women who answered both questions, 96 (19 per cent) were uncertain if they would work part-time if their employer allowed it. Of the 50 per cent who would not choose to work part-time, a substantial minority (36 per cent) said they only worked full-time because their career would suffer otherwise. Of the 31 per cent who would choose to work part-time if allowed, nearly half (46 per cent) said they only worked full-time for career reasons. It does look as though those who would seek part-time options if available are discouraged at present by the likely career impact of such a choice.

A significant proportion of those in this study who were working full-time would have preferred to work part-time and were discouraged either by the lack of this option in their current job and/or by the likely negative impact on their career.

6.4 Summary

- Flexible and part-time working emerge as important issues in this study. The form of flexibility at work most desired by the respondents was emergency time off (seen as helpful by 93 per cent, with 75 per cent rating it as very helpful). Other forms of flexibility that were highly valued were in the timing of the working day, reduction in working hours (seen as helpful by 61 per cent) and the ability to work from home.

- The employers involved in this study were clearly offering some flexibility at work, particularly in the areas of emergency time off and timing of the working day. The forms of flexibility most available were also those most sought. However, the level of provision still fell short of demand. Managers were less likely to have access to reduced hours, but were more able to take emergency time off or work at home to some extent.

- Part-time working was attractive to those who did it, although 76 per cent of current or past part-timers thought it had damaged their career opportunities (44 per cent definitely and 32 per cent to some extent).

- Part-time working was also attractive to a significant proportion of full-timers. About a third (32 per cent) of full-timers would take up part-time work if it were an available option. If this really happened, very nearly half the total sample involved in this study would currently be working part-time. If we take into account those who had previously worked part-time, 58 per cent would work part-time at some time in their careers. We have to remember, however, that this sample was heavily weighted with women with very young children.

- Over 40 per cent of those currently working full-time said they only did so because their career would suffer if they worked part-time. Those full-timers who would opt for part-time working would do so in spite of their belief that it would damage their careers. For those who would not opt for part-time working, belief that their careers would suffer was an important factor. This sample of full-time working mothers clearly express the difficult tensions between home and work roles for well qualified women at work today.

Chapter Seven : Attitudes to Work and Career

7.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapters we have looked at some specific aspects of returning to work after a career break. We have examined the pattern of breaks taken, childcare issues, career progression and flexible working options. In this final chapter presenting data we turn to a more general perspective on combining work and career with family life. A number of questions towards the end of the questionnaire (Sections I and J) were designed to obtain this wider view. Respondents were asked about their job and career satisfaction, career ambition, career plans, mobility and attitudes to a range of issues connected with combining work and family life.

7.2 Job and career satisfaction

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with both their job and their career before their first break and at the time of the survey.

There was little change recorded in the levels of job satisfaction over the period since before the first break, although on such a large sample it was a significant change (Table 7.1). Those currently working part-time recorded a larger drop in job satisfaction than groups with other patterns of employment status. In general, however, it seems that once back at work, most respondents still found considerable satisfaction in their jobs (86 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied at the time of the survey).

Table 7.1: Change in Job Satisfaction by Employment Status over Time

Job Satisfaction	Very Satisfied (1) %	Satisfied (2) %	Unsatisfied (3) %	Very Unsatisfied (4) %	N	Mean Values
Part-time						
Satisfaction before 1st break	34	57	8	1	224	1.77
Current Satisfaction	25	61	12	2	224	1.92
Was Part-time						
Satisfaction before 1st break	34	56	8	2	127	1.76
Current Satisfaction	35	54	11	0	127	1.76
Always Full-time						
Satisfaction before 1st break	35	58	6	1	412	1.75
Current Satisfaction	36	50	12	2	409	1.80
Total						
Satisfaction before 1st break	34	57	7	1	763	1.76
Current Satisfaction	32	54	12	2	760	1.83

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2, I1 and I2)

The story changes when we look at career satisfaction, where the findings are less optimistic. Before their first break, 25 per cent of the sample were very satisfied with the progress of their careers and 59 per cent were satisfied - 84 per cent altogether (Table 7.2). At the time of the survey 19 per cent were still very satisfied and 45 per cent satisfied - 64 per cent altogether. This represented a very significant drop in career satisfaction. The drop in career satisfaction was sharpest for those currently working part-time. Their current career satisfaction was substantially lower than for those working full-time comparing across groups with children of similar dependency.

Table 7.2: Change in Career Satisfaction by Employment Status over Time

Career Satisfaction	Very Satisfied (1) %	Satisfied (2) %	Unsatisfied (3) %	Very Unsatisfied (4) %	N	Mean Values
Part-time						
Satisfaction before 1st break	27	58	14	1	221	1.90
Current Satisfaction	9	48	37	7	219	2.42
Was Part-time						
Satisfaction before 1st break	27	59	12	2	127	1.87
Current Satisfaction	25	39	30	6	127	2.17
Always Full-time						
Satisfaction before 1st break	24	59	15	2	408	1.96
Current Satisfaction	22	46	27	5	408	2.15
Total						
Satisfaction before 1st break	25	59	14	2	756	1.93
Current Satisfaction	19	45	30	6	754	2.23

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2, I1 and I2)

Current job satisfaction was rather lower among those with the youngest children (allowing for employment status), although some of these women would still be settling back into work after their breaks (Appendix 7.1). Career satisfaction did not vary strongly by age of children, once the different patterns of employment status was allowed for.

Job satisfaction was higher for those in higher level jobs, but they also had higher job satisfaction before their first break. The same pattern is evident for career satisfaction, even allowing for employment status. The patterns of job and career satisfaction were similar by sector.

Those who had taken two or more breaks had similar levels of job satisfaction to those who had only taken one. However, career satisfaction seemed to suffer further erosion after the second break. Of those who had taken more than one break, 60 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with their career progress, compared with 67 per cent who had taken only one break. Some of this may be that those who had taken more than one break were more likely to be working part-time.

In summary then, career breaks did not greatly diminish job satisfaction, but had a greater negative effect on satisfaction with career progression, especially for those working part-time.

7.3 Career commitment

The slower career progress of women compared with men is frequently blamed on their lack of 'ambition' (Hirsh and Jackson, 1990). It is often assumed that a major drop in commitment to career and therefore ambition occurs when women have children, and make their career choices contingent on their home circumstances. The respondents were asked to classify the way in which having a family had changed their commitment to work and career, as shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Impact of Family on Career Commitment by Employment Status over Time

Impact of Family on Career Commitment	Employment Status Over Time						Total Sample	
	Part-time		Has worked part-time		Always Full-time			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
More ambitious	9	4	14	11	31	8	54	7
Just as committed	39	17	36	28	174	42	249	33
Career will wait	65	29	21	17	68	16	154	20
Aspirations lower	75	33	48	38	104	25	227	30
Not so committed	36	16	8	6	36	9	80	10
N =	224	100	127	100	413	100	764	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2 and I3)

The replies to this question were perhaps less optimistic than to many other parts of the questionnaire. About 40 per cent showed fairly positive responses (seven per cent more ambitious, 33 per cent just as committed to career), but that left 60 per cent with lower career ambition after a career break (20 per cent with their career 'waiting a while', 30 per cent with lower aspirations and ten per cent less committed to job or career). Those who had worked part-time in the past were less positive than full-timers but more committed than those currently working part-time. The part-timers were more likely than others to see their career as 'on hold'.

There were some differences in career commitment by life stage (Appendix 7.2). Those who were older (over 40) with preschool children (ie who had taken their first break later on) were most likely to have retained their career ambition. Younger mothers who still had pre-school children were most likely to see their career as 'on hold' for a while. There also seemed to be some recovery in career ambition amongst those who had been back at work for more than five years (Appendix 7.3), although these 'survivors' may have been more career oriented to start with than the sample as a whole.

In general these results show that although the respondents were still committed to work, their career commitment did suffer a reduction, especially when their children were young and if they worked part-time.

7.4 Career plans

The respondents were asked about the extent to which they had planned their career up to now, and given thought to their future career. Eighty one per cent felt they had planned their career to some extent (very consciously or with some thought), although only 17 per cent had planned 'very consciously'. Twenty per cent of managers had planned very consciously (and 85 per cent with at least some thought) compared with ten per cent of professionals (51 per cent with at least some thought).

Comparing this with the extent of their plans for the future, 81 per cent had some ideas or very clear ideas about their future careers (84 per cent for managers, 74 per cent for professionals). Nineteen per cent had only 'vague thoughts' about the future. Having children, certainly does not appear to diminish thought about career. Those with younger children were as likely to be thinking about their careers as those with older children. There was also very little difference in the extent of career planning according to employment status. Interestingly, part-timers who we have already seen thought their careers had been adversely affected by their choice of part-time status, were still as likely as full-timers to be thinking about their career future.

So what plans are women making for their future jobs? Nearly three quarters of respondents thought they would be working for the same employer in three years' time (Table 7.4). Few expected to be working in a different field or not working at all. There was considerable uncertainty, however, about these career plans. For example, nearly a quarter replied 'don't know' to the items on working at a higher level and working in the same job. Twenty nine per cent did not know if they would be working in quite a different field. This degree of uncertainty is probably quite realistic. Those working part-time were more likely to think they would still be in the same job, and less likely than others to think they would be working at a higher level.

100

Table 7.4: Career Plans by Employment Status over Time

	% Answering 'yes'			
In three years' time, expect to be:	Part-time	Was Part-time	Full-time	Total
Working for same employer	67	78	76	74
Working in same job	32	25	25	27
Working at a higher level	31	49	53	46
Working in a different field	10	7	9	9
Not working/on leave	6	3	4	4
N =	217	119	397	733

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2 and I4)

Managers were less likely to expect to be working in the same job (20 per cent) compared with professionals (40 per cent), and more likely to think they would be working at a higher level (51 per cent compared with 39 per cent of professionals). These differences were not due to the higher incidence of part-time working among professionals. Those in the finance sector were more confident overall of their promotion chances, but this appeared to be due to the higher weighting of managers in this sector.

7.5 Geographical mobility

Respondents were asked the extent to which geographical mobility was important to their future career progress and the extent to which the need for mobility was likely to impede their career progress. As shown in Table 7.5, 37 per cent felt the need for mobility was significant or very significant. This was based on their perceptions of significance, not on any contractual requirements for mobility. Thirty per cent thought that this factor would impeded their career progress (12 per cent to a very significant degree and 18 per cent to a significant degree). Those working in the public sector were the most likely to think that mobility considerations were likely to impede their career progress.

Table 7.5: Need for Mobility by Sector

	% Rating 'Very Significant' or Significant				
	Finance	Public	Manufacturing/ Energy	Retail/ Services	Total
Geographical mobility is important to career progress	37	40	30	43	37
Career progress will be impeded by need for mobility	25	37	27	28	30
N =	212	237	183	135	767

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F1 and J2)

Mobility was a much more crucial factor for managers than for professionals (Appendix 7.4) and most of all for senior managers.

7.6 Combining work and family

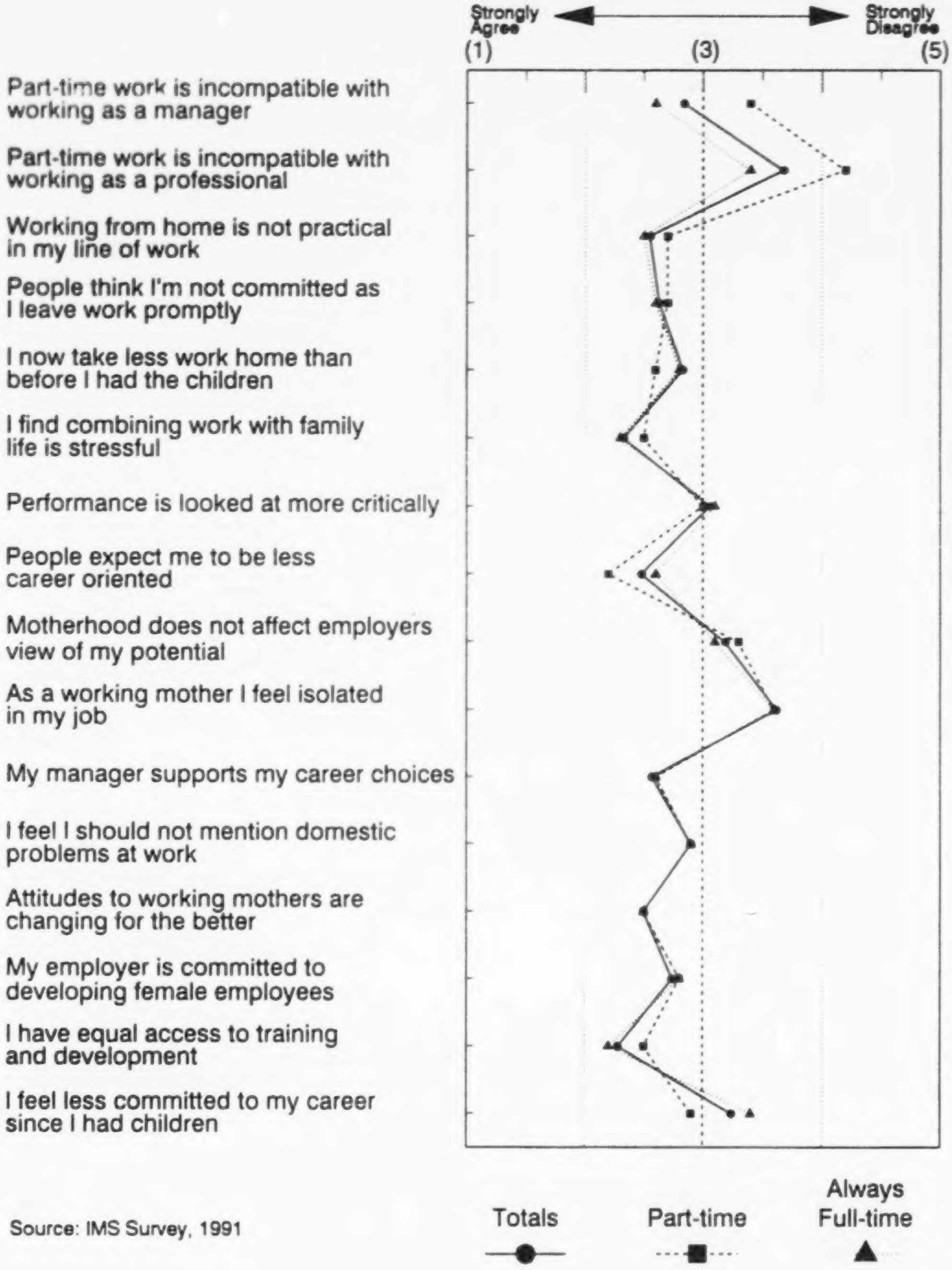
In this section we look at the more general attitudinal responses given in the survey to a range of items about the reality of combining work with family life (Question J1). Some of these statements are put positively and some negatively so the results need to be looked at with some care. Figure 7.1 shows the responses to these items in diagrammatic form. Points towards the left indicate agreement with the statement and points towards the right show disagreement. Appendix 7.5 gives the numerical results of this question.

We shall first look at the overall responses to these questions and then at differences in response patterns between groups.

The strongest responses (ie ones where the mean values were the furthest from the mid-point) indicated that the respondents held the following views:

- they have had equal access to training and development;
- part-time work is not incompatible with being a professional;
- combining work with family life is stressful;
- working mothers do not feel isolated;
- people do expect them to be less career oriented;
- attitudes to working mothers are changing for the better;
- working from home is not practical in their kind of work.

Figure 7.1: Combining Work and Family - Part-time/Always Full-time -



Source: IMS Survey, 1991

These were the issues on which the strongest message was sent by the respondents. The response on isolation is heartening, as is that on training where other research has suggested that women do not have equal access (Clarke, 1991). However, the issue of perceived career orientation is more problematic, and the simple but strong message about stress has not yet been widely acknowledged.

The respondents also felt on balance that:

- people think they are not committed because they leave work promptly;
- their employer is committed to developing female employees;
- they do not feel less committed to their career since having children.

Issues on which much weaker views were expressed showed they felt:

- part-time work is incompatible with being a manager;
- they take less work home since having children;
- their work performance was not looked at more critically;
- motherhood has affected how their potential is seen;
- domestic problems should not be mentioned at work.

Of course, an average response close to the mid-point can conceal polarised views. This was the case on the issues of part-time working for managers, and mentioning domestic problems at work.

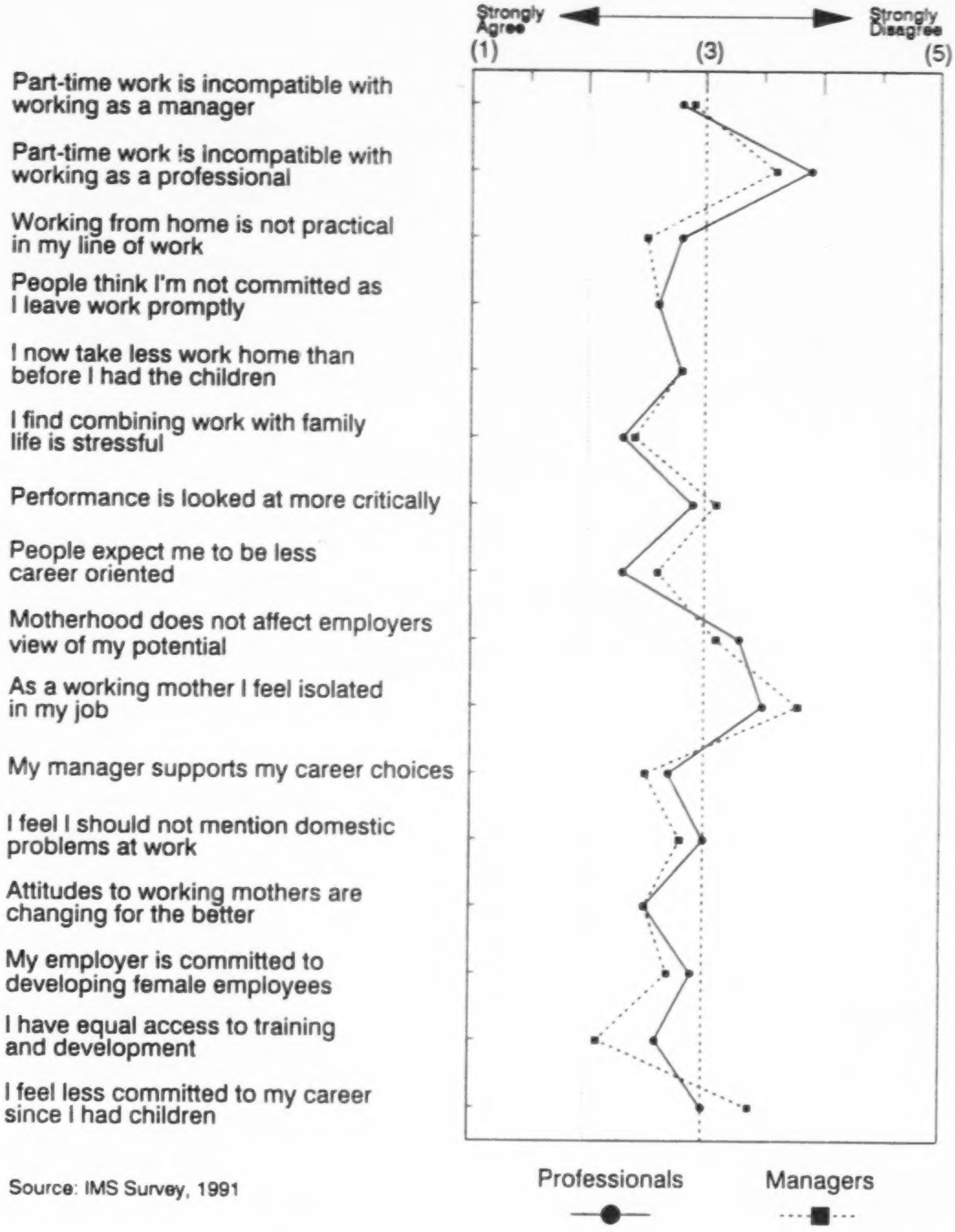
This general pattern of response shows some fairly positive attitudes to their situation. The general stress of combining work with family life emerges as the single most important negative view. The respondents were by and large positive about the way they were viewed by their employers, although their views on their employers' commitment to development, and how their performance was perceived were only weakly positive. They felt on balance that motherhood did affect how their employers saw their potential. Again, it is the attitude of employers to their career development which emerges as the main focus of uncertainty.

On some of these issues we might expect different groups of women to have formed different views (Appendix 7.6). As shown on Figure 7.1 part-timers had similar views on most items, but not surprisingly disagreed quite strongly with the statements that part-time working was incompatible with being a manager or a professional. Those who had been part-time and now worked full-time were closer to the views of full-timers on these items. Part-timers registered less stress in combining work and family life. They felt more strongly than others that people expected them to be less career oriented and, indeed, just about agreed that they were less career committed. They were less positive about their access to training and development.

Professionals were more negative on a number of career related items than managers as shown in Figure 7.2. Professionals were more likely to think that people expected them to be less career oriented, they felt less supported in their career choices, and had a more pessimistic view of their employers' commitment to developing female employees and their access to training and development. They were also rather more likely to think their performance was looked at more critically. Professionals were more likely than managers to think they could work from home. Senior managers had more positive views of their access to training and development, how others saw their career orientation and potential, and their support for career choice. Cause and effect are interesting in this area. This study does not tell us whether attitudes really are more positive towards senior managers who have taken breaks than towards more junior staff, or whether they are simply more positive individuals who have refused to be deterred. They were also older and perhaps therefore had a different perspective on that very sensitive time immediately after a break.

Part-time managers (103 respondents) had different views from other managers on a number of items. Not surprisingly, they were in strong disagreement with the statement on part-time working for managers (mean 3.8) and professionals (mean 4.2). They were more likely to agree that people saw them as less career oriented (mean 2.2) and more likely to agree that they felt less committed to their careers (mean 2.8).

Figure 7.2: Combining Work and Family
- Managers/Professionals -



Source: IMS Survey, 1991

Respondents in the finance sector were more opposed to part-time working, especially for managers. They were also the most likely to think that leaving work promptly was frowned on, and that they should not mention domestic problems at work.

7.7 Advice to women

Three general, open-ended questions were included at the end of the questionnaire. The first of these asked the respondents what advice they would give to other professional and managerial women seeking to combine work with having a family. Beneath the wide range of comments made (listed in Appendix 7.7) there is one central theme which emerges very clearly. It concerns the need to face up to the inherent conflicts of balancing home and work and to seek sensible assistance with the practical problems of combining two demanding jobs. In a wide variety of ways, the respondents advise women to adjust their lives at home and at work so that the demands on them are manageable.

The most common specific advice given, in descending order of frequency, was as follows:

- organise good childcare;
- enlist your partner's co-operation;
- seek flexible arrangements at work;
- delegate more tasks to others;
- get properly organised;
- develop a balanced attitude to home and work demands;
- set realistic standards for what you can achieve;
- don't feel guilty about working;
- establish priorities.

Flexible arrangements at work were given a high priority by those working part-time who had clearly sought this to a larger degree than most. Those working full-time were particularly concerned about childcare and also gave a high emphasis to obtaining partner's help, delegating, getting organised and developing a balanced attitude to home/work demands.

The same advice by and large was given by respondents at different levels. More senior groups placed a heavier emphasis on getting partner's support, delegation and getting well organised. Not surprisingly, flexible arrangements at work and childcare were mentioned relatively more often by those with pre-school children. Those in the manufacturing and retail sectors were more likely to mention flexible work arrangements, and those in finance placed more emphasis on delegation (perhaps because they have less flexibility available). Those who had taken more than one break were more likely to mention the support of partners (perhaps valued more as time goes by!).

7.8 Advice to employers

The messages to employers were also clear. If women are to balance two jobs then employers can help by acknowledging the practical problems encountered and by offering various types of practical support. The respondents would have welcomed special help of this kind but then expected to be valued and judged on the output they achieved at work. The comments made are listed in Appendix 7.8. In descending order of frequency, the most common comments were:

- be more flexible and understanding;
- offer more opportunities for part-time working/job-sharing;
- provide workplace nurseries/creches;
- judge people by their performance/don't stereotype 'mothers';
- treat as equal with colleagues (eg for promotion);
- offer financial help with childcare.

We have seen throughout that childcare is an issue which working mothers live with day-in day-out, although it only appears on the national agenda spasmodically. Employers may have convinced themselves that it is not their responsibility, but their employees are still looking for help from any quarter. The plea for flexibility and understanding is a wide ranging one. It covers a number of very practical concerns (emergency time-off, adjustment of hours etc), but also seems to imply an attitude shift. As we have seen in this chapter, many women still feel that the practical problems of managing a job and children need to be hidden from their employers. They would prefer an environment in which these problems can be acknowledged, discussed and solved rather than hidden. The request for part-time working should come as no surprise given the findings of Chapter 6. Once at work, women want no more - but no less - than to be judged on what they achieve as 'workers' not as 'mothers'.

By and large women offered similar advice to employers whatever their employment status, level and sector. Those who were working or had previously worked, part-time were more likely to mention part-time working in their advice to employers. Those currently working full-time were more likely to mention being treated on equal terms with colleagues and being judged by performance, as were senior managers.

7.9 General comments

In reply to the final general question about career development after the career break, just over half the respondents (56 per cent) offered some comment. The comments are briefly listed in Appendix 7.9. Three common concerns were:

- the adverse effect of part-time work on career;
- lack of career development;
- the need for more flexible working.

These comments again show the conflicting dual views which have already surfaced - that women want more flexibility at work, but that the most obvious form of flexibility - part-time working - has a negative impact on career.

Two other common comments bring to light issues which have had less explicit attention in this study. First, the respondents felt that a more thorough career review and counselling on return to work would be helpful. Secondly, they emphasised the importance of the line manager in life 'beyond the break'.

7.10 Summary

This chapter has examined general attitudes to work and career among this sample of returners. The main points emerging included:

- **Most of the respondents were satisfied with their jobs (86 per cent satisfied or very satisfied) and there had been only a small drop in their general level of job satisfaction since their first career break. However, the picture for career satisfaction was different. 64 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with their career progress, compared with 84 per cent before their first break - a considerable fall. The drop in career satisfaction was sharpest for those working part-time.**

- **60 per cent had lower levels of career ambition than before having children. This was split between groups who saw their careers as 'waiting a while' (20 per cent of the sample), those still committed to their jobs but with lower career aspirations (30 per cent) and those less committed to job or career (only 10 per cent). However, a substantial majority (over 80 per cent) claimed to have ideas about their future careers, although only a fifth had very clear plans.**

- **37 per cent of the sample felt that geographical mobility was of significant importance to their future career progression. 30 per cent felt the need for mobility would significantly impede their career progress over the next few years.**

- **On a number of attitudinal statements concerned with combining work with family, positive views were expressed about access to training and development, part-time professional work, an absence of feeling isolated, and improvement in attitudes to working mothers. Negative views were expressed about the general stress of combining work with family life, and other people's expectations that they would be less career oriented. The majority of respondents (60 per cent) did not believe that it was practical for them to work from home, although this was a form of flexibility that many desired.**

- **Part-timers registered less stress than full-timers, but felt more strongly that others expected them to be less career oriented. They were also less positive about access to training and development. Managers were more positive than professionals on a number of items, especially those concerned with perceptions of potential and career development.**

- **Respondents offered the following advice to other women taking breaks: organise good childcare, enlist partner's co-operation, seek flexible arrangements at work, delegate more and get organised, and develop a balanced attitude to home and work demands.**

- **Their corresponding advice to employers was: be more flexible and understanding, offer more part-time work/job-sharing, provide workplace childcare, judge women equally with men on their performance, offer financial help with childcare. The themes of flexibility, childcare assistance and assessment on merit come out strongly. However, the tension between wanting part-time work and its impact on career emerged again in general comments at the end of the questionnaire. Here the demand for flexible working and the adverse impact of part-time work on career were both frequently mentioned.**

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Chapter Eight : Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter we draw together the main results of this survey study of the career experience of professional and managerial women 'beyond the career break'. We look at the main issues which have emerged and the implications of the study for women taking breaks and for employers.

In examining these results we must bear in mind that the study has looked at a very particular group of women at a particular point in time. The 785 women participating in the study were working in professional and managerial jobs, and had all taken at least one short or long break from work to have children. They had returned from their most recent break to work for the same employer. Most of their 45 employers were large and had an interest in retaining women. We might therefore assume that these women were the ones who would be seen as the 'successes' in terms of return after a break. They were in relatively senior jobs and had been retained by their employers who should be among those with the most positive attitudes and policies to working women. In short, if these women could not successfully combine work with motherhood, then woe betide the rest. If these women were finding satisfactory ways of managing life 'beyond the break' then there is hope that others may do so more easily in time.

In terms of the point in time at which the survey was conducted, there are two aspects to note. Firstly, the point in time in the lives of the women is important. Nearly 70 per cent of the women were in their thirties, and they had taken their first break at an average age of 30. Two thirds had taken only one break from work, and just over half had only one child. Moreover, they had been back at work since their most recent break for a relatively short time - an average of just over two and a half years. Secondly, the point in time in the wider economy may also have been important. The survey was conducted in the summer of 1991, when the recession had not yet threatened the jobs of the sample to any great extent or made it difficult to bring them back into the organisation. The women were also looking back over a period since their breaks when the country had been relatively prosperous, and career opportunities relatively good.

8.2 Managing the career break

When we look at the experience of these women in taking a career break, we should remember that they had all returned to their previous employers. Presumably those women who have really bad experiences of managing a break are likely not to return.

Most of the sample took relatively short breaks (80 per cent took nine months or less) and 80 per cent had never resigned from work to have a baby. Most had never seriously contemplated giving up work when they started a family. Over 70 per cent were very sure they would come back to work at the time they took their recent break.

Rather over half the sample (58 per cent) had their jobs held for them while they were away from work, either by leaving it unfilled or by filling it temporarily. This still leaves a substantial minority for whom the return to work also involved a job change.

Given their strong commitment to work in general, the factors most important to this group of women in deciding to return to work were close to home - being able to arrange suitable childcare, the support of their partner and the health of the baby. Of the factors within the control of employers, being able to fit work with domestic responsibilities (through some degree of work flexibility) and the job on offer (including some consultation about this) were relatively important.

The women felt mildly positive about most aspects of the way their break had been handled, although there was still plenty of room for improvement. They felt most positive about their employers' confidence that they would return, and their own feelings of confidence once back at work. They were less satisfied with the degree of contact during the break, updating on return and consultation about the job to which they would return. The study suggests that the management of career breaks has probably been improving over recent years.

8.3 Childcare

The sample seemed to see childcare as an inescapable feature of their every day lives with which they had to cope as well as they could. The sources of childcare most used were family members (including partners), childminders and nannies (mainly 'live-out'). Even this sample of women, working for some leading employers, had very little access to employer provided or supported creches (used by about two per cent) or local authority creches or nurseries. For all the talk of company creches over the past few years, they have had little impact even on this privileged group.

Solutions to childcare were at best temporary, and arrangements changed frequently even for those with school age children. Childcare was, of course, also expensive. The average childcare bill for those working full-time was £85 per week.

Although three quarters of the sample expressed some degree of anxiety about childcare, the largest group (56 per cent of the total) saw it as an intermittent worry. Childcare was as much of a problem for those with school age children as those with pre-school children. The need for care for school aged children is still little addressed in public debate or in most employers' initiatives. The problems caused when childcare breaks down (through change of arrangement, illness of child or carer etc) emerge as a recurrent theme in this study. Perhaps employers should focus more of the effort they put into childcare into helping women through these intermittent periods of crisis. Indeed, time off work when arrangements break down was the most desired enhancement to childcare (desired by 95 per cent, available to 18 per cent). For this group of women, the provision of emergency childcare may also be worth examining.

The sample also sent a strong message about the costs of childcare. They called for financial help through tax relief and employer assistance (available to only three per cent).

8.4 Partners

This study reminds us to think more clearly about the role of men whose wives are combining demanding jobs with the care of young children. Three quarters of the women relied on their partners to help with childcare at least occasionally, and a third relied on their partners regularly or every working day. Many of these women worked long additional hours, and spent nights away from home quite regularly. Presumably at these times partners were often caring for the children. Moreover, support of the partner was a key factor in the return to work. Perhaps employers should face up to the reality of how working couples cope with their complex lives. They should consider how to enlist the support of partners in managing the break and return to work. They should also acknowledge that their male employees may need some flexibility in their own working patterns to accommodate their role in childcare.

8.5 Careers beyond the break

The sample experienced very little of the downward job mobility found in the population of working women as a whole. Only nine per cent returned to a job at a lower level than the one they had held before their break. It seems that these women were protected from loss of job status by a range of factors: they did not resign and took relatively short breaks; they were well established in their careers; they returned to the same employers. Also the economy was fairly buoyant at the time of their breaks, and they were working for employers with at least some interest in retaining female staff.

Since their recent break a third had been promoted and a substantial number had made lateral or functional moves (nearly 30 per cent for each). Of those who had taken more than one break, 60 per cent had been promoted since their first break. We cannot say how these figures compare with their male colleagues, but there does at least seem to be some career progression beyond the break.

Two features of career progress are of special interest. Firstly, career progress was much more limited for part-timers than for full-timers. Secondly, few had moved from professional to managerial jobs since their breaks, although the time scale was admittedly short. Ninety per cent of the managers in the sample had been in management posts before their recent break. Of those managers who had taken more than one break, nearly three quarters had already been managers before their first break. For this sample at least, most of the managers had already reached management before starting a family.

Further research is needed to track the career progress of women over longer periods of time through their child rearing years, and especially to look at whether those who work part-time disadvantage themselves permanently even if they subsequently return to full-time work.

8.6 Career satisfaction and career ambition

The study gives us a very positive picture of job satisfaction among the sample, and there was very little drop in job satisfaction over the period since before their first career break. However, the findings on career satisfaction show deep ambivalence to maintaining career momentum through the child-raising years. There was a marked drop in satisfaction with career progress over the period since their first break.

Levels of career ambition had fallen for 60 per cent of the sample since having a family. Some saw their careers as 'waiting a while' (20 per cent of the sample) and others were still committed to their jobs but had lower career aspirations (30 per cent).

Lack of confidence about future career was also reflected in the women's perceptions of how others saw their career orientation and potential. This may be in part a reflection of the relatively short time that these women had been back at work, and the survey showed some signs that career ambition may recover as children grow. However, there is clearly an issue for employers here. It concerns their role, especially through line managers, in nurturing career ambition among women returners, and in talking to individual women about how they want to deal with their careers in the period when their children are young. Employers should be wary of confusing short term 'ambition' with longer term 'potential'. They should also be aware that not all women become less ambitious when they have children.

This study also reinforces the danger to professional and managerial women of career development approaches which concentrate critical experiences and job changes in the early thirties, the time at which these women were having their children.

8.7 Flexible and part-time working

Flexible and part-time working emerge as very important issues in this study. The form of work flexibility most desired by the sample was time off for domestic emergencies including the breakdown of childcare arrangements. Also sought were flexibility in the timing of the working day, reduction in working hours and the ability to work from home (although 60 per cent thought this was not practical in their kind of work). Where employers were offering flexibility it was in those areas most desired, but provision fell far short of demand.

This sample yielded a surprisingly large number of women working part-time (29 per cent, including job-sharers) and a substantial sample (17 per cent) who were working full-time at the time of the survey but had worked part-time at some time in the past. These groups gave us an excellent opportunity to compare the experiences and perceptions of full-time and part-time working mothers.

Part-timers had progressed less in their careers since their breaks, felt less positive about their access to training and development and also felt less certain about their future career prospects. They had suffered a larger drop in career satisfaction and career ambition and felt that others saw them as less career oriented and of lower potential. However, they were satisfied with many aspects of their working lives and registered less stress than those working full-time.

Even in the face of this strong perception that part-time working damages your career (borne out by the factual data), part-time working was attractive to many in the study. About a third of the full-timers in the study would take up part-time work if this were an available option. If we take into account those who were working part-time or had done so in the past, about 58 per cent of the sample would work part-time at some stage in their lives if they had the choice.

This leaves employers with a serious dilemma. If they wish to maximise the numbers of women reaching senior positions in the short term they should not encourage part-time working. However, if they wish to make life more manageable and less stressful for their female employees, they should accommodate more part-time working while children are young, but ensure that career development is maintained as far as possible.

8.8 Senior managers

The sample was composed of about two thirds managers and one third professionals, who were younger and twice as likely to be working part-time.

Managers emerged, not surprisingly perhaps, as surer of their work and career orientation and more confident of how others saw them at work. They were less likely to think that having a baby would affect their careers.

The sample also contained 54 senior managers (self-classified) who were rather different in several respects. Over half these senior managers were in their thirties with only pre-school children. Seventy eight per cent of the senior managers had always worked full-time although a further 16 per cent had worked part-time in the past. Senior managers were more heavily focused on their own job and career orientation and less concerned about other issues (childcare, partner's support etc). They were more confident about their own access to training and development and how their potential and performance was viewed by others. Of course, we do not know whether these senior women held different attitudes because they were in senior positions, or whether their attitudes had been causal in their career progress.

This study therefore points to dangers in assuming that all women have the same attitudes to managing a family and a career, even those in very senior positions. Differences in attitudes may limit the extent to which female senior managers are seen as helpful role models by women at lower levels who may have struck a different balance of priorities between home and work.

8.9 Lessons for women and employers

The sample were asked about their attitudes to a number of aspects of combining work with family. They were generally positive about access to training and development, did not feel isolated, and thought attitudes to working mothers were improving. The stress of combining work with family life emerged as the most negative aspect of their experience. They also believed that motherhood had affected other people's views of their career orientation. They were not as sure as they should have been that their performance was not looked at more critically than before. Rather as with the experience of managing the break, many of these general attitudinal items showed only a very weakly positive experience of how they were treated at work. Attitudes of employers to career development emerged as the main focus of uncertainty.

The respondents offered the following advice to other women taking breaks:

- organise good childcare;
- enlist partner's co-operation;
- seek flexible arrangements at work;
- delegate more and get organised;
- develop a balanced attitude to work and home demands.

To this list we should perhaps only add:

- think very carefully about the trade offs between full and part-time working;
- make as much career progress as possible before starting a family.

The advice the women offered to employers captures very succinctly the main themes which have emerged in this study:

- be more flexible and understanding;
- offer more part-time working/job-sharing;
- provide workplace childcare;
- judge men and women equally on their performance;
- offer financial help with childcare.

To this list we might add:

- be more aware of and responsive to the fathers' role in dual career families;
- remember that women are not all the same in how they see the balance between home and work, their career ambitions and the types of support they most value.

The issue of flexibility and understanding is much broader than formal policies around part-time work etc. It reflects the many ways in which employers can make life manageable for these women, and the general need to be able to discuss at work practical problems which may arise. The need to avoid visibility of domestic responsibilities (eg mentioning domestic issues at work, leaving work promptly etc) affected significant numbers of women in this study. It is hard to face problems properly if they have to be kept hidden. The participants advocating flexibility and understanding often mentioned the loyalty which employers could gain in return for offering such a climate of tolerance.

On the *childcare* front, women still feel there is little support from any quarter - state of employer. Employers clearly need to think through their stance on this issue. Although workplace childcare came out high in the advice offered to employers, financial help and emergency time off were higher priorities for the sample as a whole. The importance of partners in managing responsibilities for children was also highlighted - an issue neglected by employers who tend to see childcare as a 'female' issue.

On *part-time working* the dilemma is clearly between offering what women want and keeping them in full-time work where their careers advance more readily. The organisation needs to think through its own priorities and possibilities for part-time working. Women also need individual attention and discussion to reach some understanding with their employers of what they want to do about their careers in the years after their break.

The message about *assessment* - how women are judged at work - seems trite but is critical. Many of the women in this study felt that having a child had adversely affected the way they were seen by others, especially in terms of career and potential. If women are really going to engage in the stressful business of combining a job with motherhood, they need to feel that other people will judge them on their actual performance and their own career orientation.

This study has certainly shown that a productive and satisfying working life does exist 'beyond the career break' for many in this vanguard group. However, there are still some significant sources of stress in their attempts to combine work with family life. There is also an uncertainty for many in how they and their employers see their future careers.

Institute of Manpower Studies

BEYOND THE CAREER BREAK

> *This is a study of managerial and professional women; that is, those at or above the level of graduate entry to the organisation. If you are a man, a woman who did NOT return to the same employer after your most recent break or a woman who has recently left that employer (other than on a career break), please return the questionnaire uncompleted with a covering note. Otherwise, please answer the following questions as fully as you are able and return the completed questionnaire direct to IMS in the reply-paid envelope provided. If you have any queries, contact either Jill Yeates or Monica Haynes on Brighton (0273) 686751. Thank you for your cooperation.*

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_____ (5-8)

1 (9)

A BACKGROUND - BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

A1 Name of employing organisation.. _____ (10-11)

A2 Your age last birthday ☐ years _____ (12-13)

A3 Are you: (*Please tick one box*)

Single (never lived with a partner).... ☐ 1

Married/living with partner............ ☐ 2

Separated/divorced/widowed............. ☐ 3 _____ (14)

A4 What is your highest educational qualification? *(Please tick one box)*

CSE to A level............... ☐ 1

Degree or equivalent......... ☐ 2

Higher degree or equivalent.. ☐ 3

HNC/HND or equivalent....... ☐ 4

Other (*Please specify*)...... ☐ 5

.... _____ (15) _____ (16-17)

A5 Do you hold any professional qualifications? YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 _____ (18)

If YES, please specify... _____ (19-20)

A6 How many children do you have in each of the following age ranges (including adopted and step-children)?

Those who have not yet started school... ☐ 1

At school but under 11 years............ ☐ 2

11 to 18 years..... ☐ 3

19 + years......... ☐ 4 _____ (21)

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B CAREER BREAKS YOU HAVE TAKEN

For the purposes of this study, a career break is a break from work, however short, to have a baby. It includes statutory maternity leave, shorter periods of maternity or adoption leave, and longer breaks spent out of employment altogether for child rearing purposes. Please count one continuous period away from work as one career break, even if you had several children during this period, or took maternity leave and then resigned without going back.

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B1 How many career breaks have you taken from work? Number: (22)

B2 At what age did you begin your first career break? Age: (23-24)

B3 At what age did you return to work from your most recent career break? Age: (25-26)

B4 How long ago did you return from your most recent career break? Years Months (27-29)

B5 How long was your most recent career break, from the time you stopped work to the time you returned to work? Number of months: (30-31)

B6 If you have had more than one career break, what is the total amount of time you have had away from work?
Not applicable ☐ 1 Number of months: (32-33)

B7 How many of your career breaks, if any, involved the following:

a) Resigning from, or leaving, your employment Number: (34)

b) Eligibility for statutory (legal) maternity leave, including re-instatemment
Number: Don't know ☐ (35)

c) Eligibility for statutory (legal) maternity pay
Number: Don't know ☐ (36)

d) Being on an employer's Long Break or Returner Scheme
Number: Don't know ☐ (37)

B8 For your most recent career break, what total pay did you receive while not at work in terms of equivalent weeks of normal pay (eg. 4 weeks full pay + 10 weeks ½ pay = 9 weeks)
weeks (38-39)

B9 For your most recent career break, how was the job you held prior to the break filled in your absence? *(Please tick one box)*

Left vacant/covered informally.. ☐ 1 Filled permanently.......... ☐ 3
Filled temporarily.............. ☐ 2 Other (*Please specify*)...... ☐ 4 (40)
.... (41)

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C DECISION TO RETURN

Thinking about your decision to return to work after your most recent career break:

C1 How certain were you when you went on leave that you would return to work?

Very unsure.................... ☐ 1 Very sure.................. ☐ 3

I thought I would.............. ☐ 2

_______ (42)

C2 How important were the following factors in your decision to return to work after your most recent career break?

(*Please tick one box for each line*)	Very important 1	Quite important 2	Not very important 3	Not at all important 4	
The general attitude of my employer	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (43)
The effective administration of the career break by my employer	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (44)
The attraction of the job to which I would return	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (45)
The geographical location of the job on offer	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (46)
The support of my colleagues at work	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (47)
Knowing other women who had successfully managed their career break and return	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (48)
Having the support of my partner	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (49)
Having the support of other family members	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (50)
Financial need	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (51)
The ability to fit my job with domestic responsibilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (52)
The ability to organise satisfactory childcare	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (53)
Having a healthy baby	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (54)
My desire to work for my own satisfaction	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (55)
The need to maintain career continuity	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (56)
The need for my baby to be weaned or part-weaned	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______ (57)

D MANAGING THE CAREER BREAK

D1 Thinking about your most recent career break

Below are a number of statements relating to the management of career breaks. Please indicate the extent to which each statement matches your experience on your most recent career break.

(Please tick one box for each line)	Yes, definitely 1	To some extent 2	To a little extent 3	No, definitely not 4	Not applicable 5	For office use only
Employer had good procedures for dealing with breaks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (58)
I managed my own break as my employer had no procedure	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (59)
My employer/manager did not believe I would return to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (60)
I knew well in advance to which job I was returning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (61)
I was consulted about the job to which I was returning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (62)
I felt pregnancy would reduce my career opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (63)
Level of contact with employer during break was satisfactory	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (64)
I received adequate updating when I returned to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (65)
Employer was flexible about length and timing of break	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (66)
Once I was back at work, I felt as though I had never left	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (67)
Took some time to regain my confidence on return to work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (68)
Organising work and home life gets harder with each child	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (69)
Organising work and home gets easier as children get older	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (70)
Managing the break gets easier after the first time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	____ (71)

E YOUR CURRENT JOB

E1 How would your employer classify you? *(Please tick one box)*

Employed full-time..............	☐ 1	Self-employed...............	☐ 4		
Employed part-time..............	☐ 2	On a career break...........	☐ 5		
Job sharing.....................	☐ 3	Other (please specify)......	☐ 6		

....

____ (72)

____ (73)

only

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(5-8)
2 (9)
(10)

E2 In which sector do you currently work? *(Please tick one box)*

Retail.......................... ☐ 1	Energy...................... ☐ 5		
Public.......................... ☐ 2	Other services.............. ☐ 6		
Manufacturing................... ☐ 3	Other (please specify)...... ☐ 7		
Financial services.............. ☐ 4	....		

(11-12)

E3 In which function (main area of work) would you describe yourself as working? *(Please tick one box)*

IT.............................. ☐ 1	Personnel................... ☐ 6
Production...................... ☐ 2	Research & Development...... ☐ 7
Sales and Marketing............. ☐ 3	Administration.............. ☐ 8
Planning........................ ☐ 4	Other (*Please specify*)...... ☐ 9
Finance......................... ☐ 5	....

(13-14)
(15-16)

E4 How would you describe the level of your current job? *(Please tick one box)*

Trainee......................... ☐ 1	Middle manager.............. ☐ 5
Junior professional............. ☐ 2	Senior or General manager... ☐ 6
Senior professional............. ☐ 3	Other (*Please specify*)...... ☐ 7
Supervisor/junior manager....... ☐ 4	....

(17)
(18-19)

E5 In a typical working week (during school term time, if applicable):

a) What are your contractual working hours? ☐ hours (20-21)

b) What is your total travel time? ☐ hours (22-23)

c) How many hours extra unpaid work do you do for your employer:

At the workplace ☐ hours (24-25)   At home ☐ hours (26-27)

E6 In school holidays, are your working hours: *(Please tick one box)*

MORE? ☐ 1   SAME? ☐ 2   LESS? ☐ 3   NONE AT ALL? ☐ 4   (28)

E7 Do you ever need to be away from home overnight?

YES ☐ 1   NO ☐ 2   (29)

If YES, in a typical month, how many nights are you away from home?

less than once a month ☐ 1 (30)   Total nights per month: (31-32)

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F CAREER HISTORY

F1 In which sector were you working at the start of your most recent career break?
(Please tick one box)

Retail..........................	☐	1	Energy......................	☐	5
Public..........................	☐	2	Other services.............	☐	6
Manufacturing..................	☐	3	Other (*please specify*)......	☐	7
Financial services.............	☐	4	....		

______ (33)
______ (34-35)

F2 In which function (main area of work) were you working at that time? *(Please tick one box)*

IT..............................	☐	1	Personnel..................	☐	6
Production......................	☐	2	Research & Development......	☐	7
Sales and Marketing............	☐	3	Administration..............	☐	8
Planning........................	☐	4	Other (*Please specify*)......	☐	9
Finance.........................	☐	5	....		

______ (36-37)
______ (38-39)

F3 At which level were you working at that time? *(Please tick one box)*

Trainee.........................	☐	1	Middle manager..............	☐	5
Junior professional............	☐	2	Senior or General manager...	☐	6
Senior professional............	☐	3	Other (*Please specify*)......	☐	7
Supervisor/Junior manager.......	☐	4	....		

______ (40)
______ (41-42)

F4 After your most recent career break, did you return to the same job (full or part-time)?

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 ______ (43)

If you returned to a different job:

a) Was it in the same function as previously?............ YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 ______ (44)

b) What was its level compared with your previous job?

LOWER ☐ 1 SAME ☐ 2 HIGHER ☐ 3 ______ (45)

F5 Since you returned to work from your most recent career break, how many times have you:
(Answer all parts)

a) Changed job at the same level?.................................. Number: ______ (46)

b) Changed function (main area of work) (with or without promotion)?. Number: ______ (47)

c) Moved to a higher level?... Number: ______ (48)

(*If you have had only one break, please go to question G1*)

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If you have had more than one career break:

F6 At which level were you working at the time of your first career break? *(Please tick one box)*

Trainee..........................	☐	1	Middle manager..............	☐	5
Junior professional.............	☐	2	Senior or General manager...	☐	6
Senior professional.............	☐	3	Other (*Please specify*)......	☐	7
Supervisor/junior manager.......	☐	4	....		

_______(49)

_______(50-51)

F7 Over the period since the beginning of your first career break, how many times in total have you: *(Answer all parts)*

a) Changed job at the same level?..................................... Number: _______(52)

b) Changed function (main area of work)?............................. Number: _______(53)

c) Moved to a job at a higher level with the same employer?......... Number: _______(54)

d) Moved to a job at a higher level by moving between employers?.... Number: _______(55)

e) Changed employer (other than for promotion)?...................... Number: _______(56)

G FLEXIBLE WORKING

G1 Since returning from your most recent career break, G1a) to what extent have the following types of flexible working arrangements been available to you. G1b) How helpful are they or would they be if they were available in combining your current job with family life?

(Please tick one box in each set for each line)	G1a) Considerable extent 1	Some extent 2	Not at all 3	G1b) Very helpful 1	Some help 2	No help/not applicable 3	For office use only
Timing of the working day (flexitime, for example)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(57-58)
Ability to arrive later or leave earlier than standard times	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(59-60)
Significant formal reduction in working hours	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(61-62)
Term-time working; school holidays spent away from workplace	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(63-64)
Ability to work from home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(65-66)
Reduction in travel demanded by the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(67-68)
Reduction in the need to stay away from home	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(69-70)
Emergency time off for domestic reasons	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	_______(71-72)

G2 Since your first career break, have you worked part-time or job-shared at all?

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 _______(73)

If YES, how long in total have you worked part-time?

Less than one year ☐ 1 Number of years: _______(74)

_______(75-76)

G3 If you have ever worked part-time/in a job-share, please indicate the extent to which each statement below matches your own views. (*If not, please go on to Question G4*).

(Please tick one box for each line)	Yes, definitely 1	Yes, to some extent 2	I neither agree nor disagree 3	I disagree 4	No, definitely not 5
Working part-time has reduced my career opportunities					
I cannot further my career without working full-time					
I get the best of both worlds					
I enjoy my children but have problems at work					
I work harder than I am rewarded for					

G4 If you currently work full-time, would you work part-time or in a job-share if your employer allowed it? *(Please tick one box)*

YES 1	NO 2	Don't know 3

G5 If you currently work full-time, is this only because you believe your career would suffer if you worked part-time? *(Please tick one box)*

YES 1	NO 2

H CHILDCARE

By childcare we mean care of children arranged whilst you are working for an employer/self-employed, or travelling to and from work.

H1 Which forms of childcare have you used regularly at any time since having your first child, and which are you currently using?

(Please tick all forms used)	Have used regularly	Currently using
Live-in nanny		
Nanny/Nanny share (not living in)		
Au-pair		
Partner		
Other family members		
Local Authority nursery/creche		
Employer run/supported nursery/creche		
Childminder (not in your home)		
Employer run play schemes		
Other (*please specify*)		

H2 Do you have to make different arrangements in the school holidays from those you use during term time?

YES ☐ 1 NO ☐ 2 NOT APPLICABLE ☐ 3

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(5-8)
3 (9)
(10)
(11)
(12)
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(15)
(16)
(17)
(18)
(19)
(20)
(21)
(22)
(23)
(24)
(25)
(26)
(27-28)
(29)

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H3 How long is it (in months) since you had to make new childcare arrangements?

Currently changing ☐ 1 ☐ months

____(30)
____(31-32)

H4 On average, how much do you spend on childcare per week?

School term £☐ School holidays £☐

____(33-35)
____(36-38)

H5 On average, how much do you spend a week as a result of being a working mother, on extra domestic help?

£☐

____(39-41)

H6 How often do you rely on your partner's help in caring for your children whilst at work? *(Please tick one box)*

Not applicable.................. ☐ 1
Never.......................... ☐ 2
Occasionally................... ☐ 3
Regularly...................... ☐ 4
Every working day.............. ☐ 5

____(42)

H7 Would you say that you have found childcare to be: *(Please tick one box)*

Not a problem.................. ☐ 1
An intermittent worry.......... ☐ 2
A frequent worry............... ☐ 3
A continuous source of worry... ☐ 4

____(43)

H8 Have considerations of childcare affected your job and career choices? *(Please tick one box)*

Not at all..................... ☐ 1
To some extent................. ☐ 2
Very significantly............. ☐ 3

____(44)

H9 Which enhancements to childcare would (or do) significantly help you combine work and the care of children, now or in future?

(*Please tick one of the boxes 1-4 for each line and tick in end column if already available to you*)	Very great help 1	Significant help 2	Limited help 3	No help at all 4	Already available	For office use only
Information on childcare available						(45-46)
Employer-run creche						(47-48)
Provision of nursery or creche near to home						(49-50)
Tax relief on childcare costs					X	(51)
Employer assistance with costs (vouchers, for example)						(52-53)
Time off when arrangements break down						(54-55)
After school/holiday schemes						(56-57)

I JOB AND CAREER SATISFACTION

For office us
only

I1 Before your first career break, how satisfied were you with:

(Please tick one box for each line)	Very satisfied 1	satisfied 2	Unsatisfied 3	Very unsatisfied 4
your job?				
the progress of your career?				

____ (58)
____ (59)

I2 How satisfied are you now with:

(Please tick one box for each line)	Very satisfied 1	Satisfied 2	Unsatisfied 3	Very unsatisfied 4
your job?				
the progress of your career?				

____ (60)
____ (61)

I3 Which statement best describes the impact of having a family on your attitudes to work and career? *(Please tick the closest)*

I am more ambitious since I had children.................................... ☐ 1
I am just as committed to my career as before having children............... ☐ 2
I am still ambitious, but my career will have to wait a while............... ☐ 3
I am strongly committed to my job, but my career aspirations are lower...... ☐ 4
I am not so committed to my job or my career................................ ☐ 5

____ (62)

I4 In three years' time, do you expect to be:

(Please tick one box for each line)	Yes 1	No 2	Don't know 3
Working for the same employer?			
Working in the same job?			
Working at a higher level than now			
Working in quite a different field?			
Not working at all/on leave?			

____ (63)
____ (64)
____ (65)
____ (66)
____ (67)

I5 To what extent have you planned your own career until now? *(Please tick one box)*

Very consciously 1	With some thought 2	With little thought 3	Totally unplanned 4

____ (68)

I6 To what extent have you thought about your future career? *(Please tick one box)*

Very clearly 1	Some ideas 2	Only vague thoughts 3	No thoughts at all 4

____ (69)

J COMBINING WORK AND FAMILY

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0133 (1-4)
(5-8)
4 (9)

J1 Below are a number of statements made by working mothers we have interviewed. Please indicate the extent to which each statement matches your own views.

(Please tick one box for each line)	I strongly agree 1	I agree 2	I neither agree nor disagree 3	I disagree 4	I strongly disagree 5	
Part-time work is incompatible with working as a manager						(10)
Part-time work is incompatible with working as a professional						(11)
Working from home is not practical in my kind of work						(12)
People think I'm not committed because I leave work promptly						(13)
I take less work home now than before I had children						(14)
I find combining work with family life stressful						(15)
My work performance is looked at more critically now						(16)
People expect me to be less career oriented						(17)
Motherhood does not affect my potential in my employers eyes						(18)
As a working mother, I feel isolated in my job						(19)
My manager supports me in my career choices						(20)
I feel I shouldn't mention domestic problems at work						(21)
Attitudes to working mothers are changing for the better						(22)
My employer is committed to developing female employees						(23)
I have had equal access to training and development						(24)
I feel less committed to my career since I had children						(25)

J2 Please indicate the importance of mobility in your further career progress.

(*Please tick* *one* *box for* *each* *line*)	Very significant 1	Significant 2	Limited significance 3	Not significant 4	Not applicable 5	
Geographical mobility is important to my future career progress with my present employer						(26)
The need for geographical mobility will significantly impede my career progress over the next few years						(27)

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J3 What advice would you give to other professional and managerial women seeking to combine work with having a family?

_______ (28-29)

_______ (30-31)

_______ (32-33)

_______ (34-35)

J4 What advice would you give to employers who wish to develop the potential of working mothers in professional or managerial jobs?

_______ (36-37)

_______ (38-39)

_______ (40-41)

_______ (42-43)

J5 Do you have any other comments on career development after the career break which you wish to make?

_______ (44)

Please return this questionnaire to: Institute of Manpower Studies
Mantell Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9RF.

Appendix 2

Appendix 2.1: Number of Breaks by Sector

Current Sector - grouped	Number of Career Breaks								Total Sample	
	1		2		3		4			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Finance	154	72	55	26	4	2	1	0	214	100
Public	135	56	90	38	12	5	3	1	240	100
Manuf/energy	125	68	53	29	4	2	1	1	183	100
Retail/services	91	66	44	32	3	2	0	0	138	100
N =	505	65	242	31	23	3	5	1	775	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A1 and B1)

Appendix 2.2: Current Job Level by Agegroup

Level of Current Job	Agegroup										Total Sample	
	Under 30		30-34		35-39		40-44		Over 45			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Junior prof	26	24	35	12	17	7	8	10	3	8	89	12
Senior prof	21	19	52	18	56	23	18	22	8	22	155	21
Junior manager	38	35	88	31	49	20	14	17	5	14	194	26
Middle Manager	21	19	89	31	103	43	30	37	16	43	259	34
Senior Manager	2	2	19	7	17	7	11	14	5	14	54	7
N =	108	100	283	100	242	100	81	100	37	100	751	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2 and E4)

Appendix 2.3: Employment Status over Time by Job Level

Employment Status over time	Level of Current Job										Total Sample	
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Part-time	37	42	66	43	43	23	57	22	3	6	206	28
Was part-time	13	15	31	20	30	16	42	17	8	16	124	17
Always full-time	39	44	57	37	115	61	155	61	40	78	406	55
N =	89	100	154	100	188	100	254	100	51	100	736	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2 and E4)

Appendix 3

Appendix 3.1: Years at Work since First and Recent Break by Job Level

	Level of Current Job										Total Sample	
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager			
Years in work since 1st break	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under one year	30	34	40	27	51	27	51	20	12	23	184	25
1 year	13	15	30	30	45	23	50	20	7	13	145	20
2 to 4 years	29	33	47	31	68	35	79	31	16	30	239	32
5 to 10 years	9	10	21	14	20	10	57	22	10	19	117	16
Over 10 years	6	7	12	8	8	4	19	7	8	15	53	7
N =	87	100	150	100	192	100	256	100	53	100	738	100
Years since returned from recent break												
Under one year	37	42	57	38	73	39	73	29	19	37	259	35
1 year	21	24	42	28	63	34	76	30	6	12	208	28
2 to 4 years	23	26	32	21	37	20	56	22	13	25	161	22
5 to 10 years	4	5	13	9	11	5	39	15	9	17	76	10
Over 10 years	3	3	7	5	4	2	10	4	5	10	29	4
N =	88	100	151	100	188	100	254	100	52	100	733	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2, B2, B4, B5, B6 and E4)

Appendix 3.2: Years at Work since First and Recent Break by Sector

	Current Sector								Total Sample	
	Finance		Public		Manuf/ energy		Retail/ Services			
Years in work since 1st break	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Under one year	62	29	38	16	45	25	42	30	187	24
1 year	51	24	27	12	31	17	41	30	150	20
2 to 4 years	61	29	78	33	73	40	31	22	243	32
5 to 10 years	30	14	53	23	26	14	14	10	123	16
Over 10 years	7	3	37	16	7	4	10	7	61	8
N =	211	100	233	100	182	100	138	100	764	100
Years since returned from recent break										
Under one year	84	40	62	26	58	33	60	44	264	35
1 year	68	32	54	23	51	29	39	29	212	28
2 to 4 years	39	18	57	24	48	27	23	17	167	22
5 to 10 years	14	7	34	15	20	11	11	8	79	10
Over 10 years	6	3	27	12	1	1	3	2	37	5
N =	211	100	234	100	178	100	136	100	759	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A2, B2, B4, B5, B6 and E2)

Appendix 3.3: Length of Most Recent Career Break by Number of Breaks

Length of most recent career break	Number of Breaks				Total Sample	
	One break		More than one break			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-3 months	20	4	28	10	48	6
4-6 months	160	33	100	37	260	34
7-9 months	209	43	98	36	307	40
10-12 months	41	8	28	10	69	9
Over 1 year	61	12	16	6	77	10
N =	491	100	270	100	761	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B1 and B5)

Appendix 3.4: Length of most Recent Career Break by Sector

Length of most recent career break	Current Sector								Total Sample	
	Finance		Public		Manuf/ energy		Retail/ Services			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-3 months	12	6	16	7	9	5	10	7	47	6
4-6 months	61	29	65	28	80	44	54	40	260	34
7-9 months	110	53	65	28	72	40	55	41	302	40
10-12 months	11	5	37	16	10	5	11	8	69	9
Over 1 year	15	7	47	20	11	6	4	3	77	10
N =	209	100	230	100	182	100	134	100	755	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B5 and E2)

Appendix 3.5: Length of most Recent Career Break by Current Job Level

Length of most recent career break	Level of Current Job										Total Sample	
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-3 months	6	7	7	5	7	7	19	7	8	15	47	6
4-6 months	25	29	41	28	63	34	97	38	24	45	250	34
7-9 months	33	38	67	45	89	47	98	39	11	21	298	41
10-12 months	12	14	13	9	17	9	19	7	5	9	66	9
Over 1 year	11	13	20	14	12	6	21	8	5	9	69	9
N =	87	100	148	100	188	100	254	100	53	100	730	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B5 and E4)

Appendix 3.6: How job was Filled During Break by Sector

How job was filled in absence	Current Sector								Total Sample	
	Finance		Public		Manuf/ energy		Retail/ Services			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Left vacant	68	32	54	23	66	36	45	33	233	30
Filled temporarily	50	23	61	26	57	31	48	35	216	28
Filled permanently	90	42	112	47	48	26	38	28	288	37
Other	6	3	9	4	13	7	6	4	34	4
N =	214	100	236	100	184	100	137	100	771	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B9 and E2)

Appendix 3.7: Certainty of Returning to Work by Length of Most Recent Break

Length of most recent break	Certainty of return to work						Total Sample	
	Very unsure		Thought I would		Very sure			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-3 months	0	0	0	0	48	100	48	100
4-6 months	8	3	35	13	217	84	260	100
7-9 months	18	6	83	27	206	67	307	100
10-12 months	8	11	17	25	44	64	69	100
Over 1 year	27	35	25	32	25	32	77	100
N =	61	8	160	21	540	71	761	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B5 and C1)

Appendix 3.8: Factors Affecting the Decision to Return

	Very important %	Quite important %	Not very important %	Not at all important %	Valid N
The general attitude of my employer	26	40	20	14	777
The effective administration of the career break by my employer	9	29	33	29	768
The attraction of the job to which I would return	39	45	11	5	779
The geographical location of the job on offer	43	30	15	11	777
The support of my colleagues at work	18	40	25	17	777
Knowing other women who had successfully managed their career break and return	12	26	28	34	774
Having the support of my partner	75	17	4	4	778
Having the support of other family members	30	28	22	20	773
Financial need	51	28	16	5	781
The ability to fit my job with domestic responsibilities	52	35	9	3	778
The ability to organise satisfactory childcare	91	6	1	2	780
Having a healthy baby	82	13	2	3	774
My desire to work for my own satisfaction	59	33	6	2	780
The need to maintain career continuity	36	43	16	5	777
The need for my baby to be weaned or part-weaned	34	24	18	24	766

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question C2)

Appendix 3.9 (i): Factors Affecting the Decision to Return by Employment Status over Time

	Mean Score of Respondents			
	Employment Status over Time			Total sample
	Part-time	Was part-time	Always full-time	
The general attitude of my employer	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.2
The effective administration of the career break by my employer	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.8
The attraction of the job to which I would return	1.8	1.7	1.9	1.8
The geographical location of the job on offer	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.9
The support of my colleagues at work	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.4
Knowing other women who had successfully managed their career break and return	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.8
Having the support of my partner	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4
Having the support of other family members	2.3	2.2	2.4	2.3
Financial need	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.7
The ability to fit my job with domestic responsibilities	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.6
The ability to organise satisfactory childcare	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.1
Having a healthy baby	1.2	1.4	1.2	1.3
My desire to work for my own satisfaction	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
The need to maintain career continuity	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9
The need for my baby to be weaned or part-weaned	2.1	2.4	2.4	2.3
N = Min	220	119	408	
Max	224	125	414	

Scale:
1 = very important
2 = quite important
3 = not very important
4 = not at all important

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question C2, E1 and G2)

Appendix 3.9 (ii): Factors Affecting the Decision to Return by Current Job Level

	Mean Score of Respondents			
	Job Level			Total sample
	Professional	Managers	Senior Managers	
The general attitude of my employer	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2
The effective administration of the career break by my employer	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.8
The attraction of the job to which I would return	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.8
The geographical location of the job on offer	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9
The support of my colleagues at work	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4
Knowing other women who had successfully managed their career break and return	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.8
Having the support of my partner	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.4
Having the support of other family members	2.2	2.4	2.8	2.3
Financial need	1.7	1.8	2.0	1.7
The ability to fit my job with domestic responsibilities	1.6	1.7	2.0	1.6
The ability to organise satisfactory childcare	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.1
Having a healthy baby	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3
My desire to work for my own satisfaction	1.7	1.5	1.3	1.5
The need to maintain career continuity	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.9
The need for my baby to be weaned or part-weaned	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.3
N = Min Max	236 243	499 505	53 54	

Scale: 1 = very important
2 = quite important
3 = not very important
4 = not at all important

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions C2 and E4)

Appendix 3.10: Experience of Career Breaks

	Yes, definitely %	To some extent %	To a little extent %	No, definitely not %	Valid N
Employer had good procedures for dealing with breaks	37	33	19	11	731
I managed my own break as my employer had no procedure	15	24	29	32	388
My employer/manager did believe I would return to work	54	20	17	9	596
I knew well in advance to which job I was returning	42	19	10	29	741
I was consulted about the job to which I was returning	39	24	17	20	665
I felt pregnancy would not reduce my career opportunities	13	22	39	26	733
Level of contact with employer during break was satisfactory	28	26	25	21	717
I received adequate updating when I returned to work	28	33	19	20	733
Employer was flexible about length and timing of break	35	32	17	16	698
Once I was back at work, I felt as though I had never left	45	35	11	8	766
Didn't take long to regain my confidence on return to work	33	24	26	17	740
Organising work and home life gets easier with each child	6	11	23	60	410
Organising work and home gets easier as children get older	17	33	18	31	624
Managing the break gets easier after the first time	29	39	20	12	306

Note: some questions reversed to give positive statements during analysis

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question D1)

Appendix 3.11 (i): Experience of Career Breaks by Employment Status over Time

	Mean score of respondents			
	Employment status			Total Sample
	Part-time	Was part-time	Always full-time	
Employer had good procedures for dealing with breaks	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1
I managed my own break as my employer had no procedure	2.9	2.5	2.8	2.8
My employer/manager did believe I would return to work	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.8
I knew well in advance to which job I was returning	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.3
I was consulted about the job to which I was returning	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.2
I felt pregnancy would not reduce my career opportunities	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8
Level of contact with employer during break was satisfactory	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.4
I received adequate updating when I returned to work	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.3
Employer was flexible about length and timing of break	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.2
Once I was back at work, I felt as though I had never left	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.8
Didn't take long to regain my confidence on return to work	2.5	2.3	2.1	2.3
Organising work and home life gets easier with each child	3.5	3.3	3.3	3.4
Organising work and home gets easier as children get older	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.6
Managing the break gets easier after the first time	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
N = Min Max	216 223	123 126	403 415	

Scale 1 = yes, definitely
2 = to some extent
3 = to a little extent
4 = no, definitely not

Note: some questions reversed to give positive statements during analysis

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions D1, E1 and G2)

Appendix 3.11 (ii): Experience of Career Breaks by Current Job Level

	Mean score of respondents			
	Job Level			Total Sample
	Professional	Manager	Senior Manager	
Employer had good procedures for dealing with breaks	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.1
I managed my own break as my employer had no procedure	2.6	2.9	2.4	2.8
My employer/manager did believe I would return to work	1.9	1.8	1.5	1.8
I knew well in advance to which job I was returning	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.3
I was consulted about the job to which I was returning	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.2
I felt pregnancy would not reduce my career opportunities	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.8
Level of contact with employer during break was satisfactory	2.5	2.3	2.2	2.4
I received adequate updating when I returned to work	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.3
Employer was flexible about length and timing of break	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.2
Once I was back at work, I felt as though I had never left	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.8
Didn't take long to regain my confidence on return to work	2.4	2.2	1.9	2.3
Organising work and home life gets easier with each child	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.4
Organising work and home gets easier as children get older	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.6
Managing the break gets easier after the first time	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2
N = Min Max	237 242	495 506	52 54	

Scale 1 = yes, definitely
2 = to some extent
3 = to a little extent
4 = no, definitely not

Note: some questions reversed to give positive statements during analysis

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions D1 and E4)Note: some questions reversed to give positive statements during analysis

Appendix 4

Appendix 4.1: Childcare Used by Dependency of Children

Form of Childcare Used	Pre-school only		Pre-school + school		School only		Older only
	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %
Live-in Nanny	6.8	4.2	17.1	9.9	12.5	4.3	-
Live-out/shared Nanny	21.7	17.1	45.0	27.0	26.9	10.0	-
Au-pair	0.8	0.2	4.5	2.7	11.3	5.6	9.1
Partner	16.5	9.7	26.1	15.3	30.6	16.2	36.4
Other family members	34.2	20.7	36.0	20.7	45.0	19.4	18.2
Local authority creche/nursery	3.8	3.0	3.6	0.9	6.3	-	9.1
Employer's creche/nursery	2.8	2.4	3.6	0.9	0.6	-	9.1
Childminder	50.7	34.4	49.5	23.4	55.6	20.0	18.2
Employer's play scheme	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.0	-
Other	18.1	15.5	17.1	12.6	20.0	8.1	18.2
N =	503		111		160		11

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions H1 and A6)

Appendix 4.2: Childcare Used by Sector

Form of Childcare Used	Finance		Public Services		Manufacturing/ energy		Retail/Services	
	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %	Ever Used %	Currently Using %
Live-in Nanny	6.1	3.3	8.7	3.3	13.5	8.1	9.4	6.4
Live-out/shared Nanny	27.6	19.6	19.9	9.5	28.6	21.6	28.8	18.7
Au-pair	1.4	0.5	5.8	2.9	4.9	2.2	1.4	0.7
Partner	15.4	9.8	28.2	12.9	16.8	10.2	23.7	15.1
Other family members	37.9	24.7	39.0	17.0	30.8	17.3	36.7	22.3
Local authority creche/nursery	3.3	3.3	7.5	2.1	3.2	1.6	2.2	0.7
Employer's creche/nursery	4.7	3.7	3.3	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.7
Childminder	47.2	29.0	55.6	27.4	49.7	31.9	51.8	31.7
Employer's play scheme	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	15.9	12.6	22.0	14.1	18.9	15.7	14.4	9.3
N =	214		241		185		139	

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions H1, E2)

Appendix 4.3: Time since new Childcare Arrangements by Employment Status over Time

Time since made new childcare arrangements	Employment Status over Time						Total Sample	
	Part-time		Has worked part-time		Always Full-time			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Currently changing	15	8	10	10	32	9	57	9
1-3 months	29	15	10	10	47	13	86	13
4-6 months	37	19	11	11	55	16	103	16
7-9 months	30	16	11	11	40	11	81	13
10-12 months	22	11	16	15	29	8	67	10
1 year	21	11	11	11	60	17	92	14
2 years	8	4	11	11	26	7	45	7
3 years	6	3	5	5	15	4	26	4
4-7 years	5	3	6	5	10	3	21	3
Over 8 years	0	0	0	0	4	1	4	1
Not applicable	20	10	11	11	34	10	65	10
N =	193	100	102	100	352	100	647	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2 and H3)

Appendix 4.4: Time since new Childcare arrangements by Dependency

Time since made new childcare arrangements	Dependency of Children						Total Sample	
	Pre-school only		Pre-school + school		School only			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Currently changing	41	10	9	9	10	7	60	9
1-3 months	55	13	15	14	16	12	86	13
4-6 months	75	18	16	15	12	9	103	15
7-9 months	63	15	12	11	9	7	84	13
10-12 months	41	10	12	11	16	12	69	10
1 year	69	16	18	17	9	7	96	14
2 years	19	4	7	7	20	15	46	7
3 years	13	3	1	1	13	10	27	4
4-7 years	1	0	5	5	16	12	22	3
Over 8 years	0	0	1	1	3	1	4	1
Not applicable	49	11	8	8	11	8	68	10
N =	426	100	104	100	135	100	665	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6 and H3)

Appendix 4.5: Amount Spent on Childcare during Term by Job Level

Average weekly amount for care term time	Level of Current Job										Total Sample	
	Junior Prof		Senior Prof		Junior Manager		Middle Manager		Senior Manager			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Nothing	8	11	21	14	12	7	17	7	3	6	61	9
Under 25 pounds	14	18	13	9	13	7	20	8	0	0	60	9
25-49 pounds	15	20	29	20	50	28	46	19	5	10	145	21
50-74 pounds	21	28	38	26	54	30	58	24	4	8	175	25
75-99 pounds	7	9	14	10	23	13	25	10	8	17	77	11
100-149 pounds	8	11	15	10	18	10	47	19	20	42	108	16
150-199 pounds	2	3	7	5	4	2	24	10	6	13	43	6
Over 200 pounds	1	1	8	6	5	3	6	2	2	4	22	3
N =	76	100	145	100	179	100	243	100	48	100	691	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E4 and H4)

Appendix 4.6: Childcare Enhancements Desired by Number of Breaks, Job Level and Dependency

	% rating as 'very great' or 'significant' help							Total Sample Average Score *
	Number of Breaks		Level		Dependency			
	One %	More than one %	Profes-sionals %	Managers %	Pre-school %	Pre-school + school %	School %	
Information on childcare available	62	50	60	58	61	50	50	2.3
Employer-run creche	55	42	34	66	58	36	34	2.4
Nursery or creche near to home	64	59	63	61	69	51	46	2.2
Tax relief on childcare costs	86	92	86	90	89	94	82	1.4
Employer assistance with costs	84	84	84	85	88	85	71	2.0
Time off when arrangements fail	95	95	94	96	96	94	92	1.9
After school/holiday schemes	71	76	67	76	72	75	72	2.5
N = Min	449	229	210	446	451	94	131	680
Max	482	258	230	487	493	107	140	785

* Scored as follows:
1 = very great help
2 = significant help
3 = limited help
4 = no help at all

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions H9, B1, E4 and A6)

Appendix 4.7: Childcare Enhancements available by Number of Breaks, Level and Dependency

	% of Respondents for whom enhancement available							
	Number of Breaks		Level		Dependency			Total Sample %
	One %	More than one %	Profes-sionals %	Managers %	Pre-school %	Pre-school + school %	School %	
Information on childcare available	23	23	20	25	25	26	16	23
Employer-run creche	7	4	5	7	8	5	4	6
Nursery or creche near to home	15	16	15	17	18	15	8	15
Employer assistance with costs	3	3	4	3	4	2	2	3
Time off when arrangements fail	18	19	11	21	20	19	12	18
After school/holiday schemes	5	8	5	7	4	11	10	6
N = Min Max	507 507	271 274	245 245	504 507	503 503	110 111	158 160	785

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions H1, B1, E4 and A6)

Appendix 5

Appendix 5.1: Job Level on Return after First Break by Length of Break

Level compared with previous job	Length of most recent career break										Total sample	
	1-3 months		4-6 months		7-9 months		10-12 months		Over 1 year			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Lower	1	5	16	10	26	13	3	7	10	16	56	11
Same	6	30	47	30	64	31	18	44	26	43	161	33
Higher	2	10	11	7	15	7	4	10	7	11	39	8
Not applicable*	11	55	85	53	103	50	16	39	18	30	233	48
N =	20	100	159	100	208	100	41	100	61	100	489	100

* returned to same job

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions B5 and F4)

Appendix 5.2: Functional Moves since Recent Break

	Not moving at all		Mean number of moves		
	No	%	Total respondents	Movers only	N
Level at time of recent break within employment status over time					
Part-time					
Professional	77	79	0.28	1.35	97
Manager	90	87	0.14	1.07	104
Has been part-time					
Professional	24	49	0.76	1.48	49
Manager	35	58	0.57	1.07	60
Always full-time					
Professional	73	74	0.38	1.48	98
Manager	170	69	0.45	1.44	248
Total	469	71	0.40	1.40	656

	Not moving at all		Mean number of moves		
	No	%	Total respondents	Movers only	N
Time at work since recent break within employment status over status over time					
Part-time					
< 1 year	87	91	0.10	1.11	96
1-5 years	74	77	0.27	1.18	96
5+ years	7	50	0.93	1.86	14
Sub total part-time	168	82	0.23	1.29	206
Has been part-time					
< 1 year	16	80	0.20	1.00	20
1-5 years	36	58	0.50	1.19	62
5+ years	5	19	1.46	1.81	26
Sub total has been part-time	57	53	0.67	1.43	108
Always full-time					
< 1 year	102	83	0.18	1.10	123
1-5 years	125	68	0.41	1.27	184
5+ years	25	46	0.98	1.82	54
Sub total always full-time	252	70	0.42	1.39	361
TOTAL	477	71	0.45	1.38	675

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F5, E1, G2, F3 and B4)

Appendix 5.3: Promotional Moves since Recent Break

	Not moving at all		Mean number of moves		
	No	%	Total respondents	Movers only	N
Level at time of recent break within employment status over time					
Part-time					
Professional	88	84	0.16	1.00	95
Manager	88	85	0.16	1.06	104
Has been part-time					
Professional	27	52	0.85	1.76	52
Manager	43	66	0.49	1.45	65
Always full-time					
Professional	63	61	0.57	1.44	104
Manager	154	60	0.55	1.38	257
Total	455	67	0.46	1.39	677
Time at work since recent break within employment status over status over time					
Part-time					
< 1 year	88	91	0.29	1.00	97
1-5 years	75	80	0.43	1.05	94
5+ years	10	83	0.39	1.00	12
Sub total part-time	173	85	0.37	1.03	203
Has been part-time					
< 1 year	20	91	0.09	1.00	22
1-5 years	41	65	0.44	1.27	63
5+ years	7	23	1.58	2.04	31
Sub total has been part-time	68	59	0.68	1.65	116
Always full-time					
< 1 year	104	86	0.14	1.06	121
1-5 years	106	54	0.54	1.18	195
5+ years	14	23	1.38	1.80	60
Sub total always full-time	224	60	0.55	1.36	376
TOTAL	465	67	0.79	1.37	695

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F5, E1, G2, F3 and B4)

Appendix 5.4: Functional Moves since First Break

	Not moving at all		Mean number of moves		
	No	%	Total respondents	Movers only	N
Level at time of first break within employment status over time					
Part-time					
Professional	22	55	0.73	1.61	40
Manager	15	48	0.68	1.31	31
Has been part-time					
Professional	11	38	1.41	2.28	29
Manager	9	45	1.15	2.09	20
Always full-time					
Professional	24	50	0.96	1.92	48
Manager	30	48	1.16	2.21	63
Total	111	48	1.01	1.94	231
Time at work since first break within employment status over status over time					
Part-time					
< 1 year	2	100	0.00	-	2
1-5 years	30	53	0.68	1.44	57
5+ years	6	38	1.19	1.90	16
Sub total part-time	38	51	0.77	1.57	75
Has been part-time					
< 1 year	-	-	-	-	-
1-5 years	12	52	0.87	1.82	23
5+ years	7	28	1.76	2.44	25
Sub total has been part-time	19	40	1.33	2.21	48
Always full-time					
< 1 year	1	100	0.00	-	1
1-5 years	38	59	0.69	1.69	64
5+ years	17	32	1.60	2.36	53
Sub total always full-time	56	47	1.09	2.08	118
TOTAL	113	47	1.04	1.96	241

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F7, F1, G2, F6, A2, B2 and B6)

Appendix 5.5: Promotional Moves since First Break

	Not moving at all		Mean number of moves		
	No	%	Total respondents	Movers only	N
Level at time of first break within employment status over time					
Part-time					
Professional	23	56	0.51	1.17	41
Manager	20	65	0.35	1.00	31
Has been part-time					
Professional	11	39	0.89	1.47	28
Manager	9	43	1.38	2.40	21
Always full-time					
Professional	14	26	1.37	1.85	54
Manager	19	29	0.98	1.39	65
Total	96	40	0.93	1.01	240
Time at work since first break within employment status over status over time					
Part-time					
< 1 year	1	50	0.50	-	2
1-5 years	34	59	0.43	0.56	58
5+ years	10	63	0.50	1.25	16
Sub total part-time	45	59	0.45	1.02	76
Has been part-time					
< 1 year	-	-	-	-	-
1-5 years	13	57	0.61	0.67	23
5+ years	7	28	1.56	1.47	25
Sub total has been part-time	20	42	1.10	1.29	48
Always full-time					
< 1 year	1	100	0.00	0.00	1
1-5 years	22	32	0.90	0.56	68
5+ years	12	21	1.59	1.25	58
Sub total always full-time	35	28	1.20	1.02	127
TOTAL	100	40	0.96	1.01	251

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions F7, E1, G2, F6, A2, B2 and B6)

Appendix 6

Appendix 6.1: Helpfulness of Flexible Working Options by Dependency of Children

	% Responding 'very helpful'				N
	Pre-school	Pre-school + school	School only	Older only	
Timing of the working day (flexitime, for example)	64	70	61	10	753
Ability to arrive later or leave earlier than standard times	64	71	60	10	749
Significant formal reduction in working hours	44	44	30	-	743
Term-time working; school holidays spent away from workplace	25	42	37	20	737
Ability to work from home	33	41	31	10	749
Reduction in travel demanded by the job	24	26	17	10	739
Reduction in the need to stay away from home	25	25	11	10	737
Emergency time off for domestic reasons	78	78	66	20	753
N =	475	105	147	10	737

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6 and G1)

Appendix 6.2: Availability of Flexible Working Options by Sector

	% available to 'considerable extent'				N
	Finance	Public	Manufacturing Energy	Retail/ Services	
Timing of the working day (flexitime, for example)	31	40	26	25	770
Ability to arrive later or leave earlier than standard times	23	35	28	22	767
Significant formal reduction in working hours	18	24	33	18	759
Term-time working; school holidays spent away from workplace	2	19	3	1	733
Ability to work from home	3	5	7	7	758
Reduction in travel demanded by the job	4	5	6	5	732
Reduction in the need to stay away from home	7	9	9	5	711
Emergency time off for domestic reasons	23	30	25	26	759
N =	199	210	174	128	711

	% available to 'some extent'				N
	Finance	Public	Manufacturing Energy	Retail/ Services	
Timing of the working day (flexitime, for example)	28	28	43	37	770
Ability to arrive later or leave earlier than standard times	43	34	49	48	767
Significant formal reduction in working hours	9	16	11	13	759
Term-time working; school holidays spent away from workplace	4	11	2	6	733
Ability to work from home	14	33	26	23	758
Reduction in travel demanded by the job	11	17	26	21	732
Reduction in the need to stay away from home	21	19	25	20	711
Emergency time off for domestic reasons	60	56	58	55	759
N =	199	210	174	128	711

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions G1 and E2)

Appendix 6.3: Views of Full-timers on Part-time work by Dependency of Children

	Dependency of Children								Total Sample	
	Pre-school Only		Pre-school + school		School Only		Older Only			
Work Part-time or job-share if allowed	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	121	38	22	33	21	16	1	17	165	32
No	132	42	29	44	88	69	4	67	253	49
Don't know	63	20	15	23	19	15	1	17	98	19
Work full-time, career suffer part-time										
Yes	136	44	26	39	53	41	1	17	216	42
No	175	56	41	61	77	59	5	83	298	58
N =	311	100	67	100	130	100	6	100	514	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6, G4 and G5)

Appendix 6.4: Part-time Preference by Career Impact (Full-time Employees only)

Career would suffer if worked part-time	Work Part-time or Job-share if allowed						Total Sample	
	Yes		No		Don't know			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Yes	74	46	91	36	48	50	213	42
No	86	54	162	64	48	50	296	58
N =	160	100	253	100	96	100	509	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions G4 and G5)

Appendix 7

Appendix 7.1: Job and Career Satisfaction by Dependency and by Sector

	Mean Values of Satisfaction *				N
	Job sat before 1st break	Current job Satisfaction	Career sat before 1st break	Current career satisfaction	
Dependency					
Pre-school only	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.3	495
Pre-school + school	1.8	1.9	1.9	2.3	109
School only	1.8	1.7	2.0	2.1	157
Older only	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.1	11
Total	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.2	772
Sector					
Finance	1.7	1.9	1.9	2.1	212
Public	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.3	235
Manufacturing/Energy	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.3	183
Retail/Services	1.6	1.8	1.8	2.2	136
Total	1.8	1.8	1.9	2.2	766

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6, F1, I1 and I2)

* 1 = Very satisfied, 2 = Satisfied, 3 = Unsatisfied, 4 = Very unsatisfied

Appendix 7.2: Impact of Family on Career Commitment by Life Stage

	Life Stage											
	Under 30 + pre-school		30-39 + pre-school		Over 40 + pre-school		Under 40 + pre-school + school		Over 40 + pre-school + school		Under 40 + school + older	
Impact of Family on Career Commitment	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
More ambitious	6	5	13	4	2	10	9	9	0	0	12	1[illegible]
Just as committed	26	24	125	34	10	48	24	24	5	45	30	4[illegible]
Career will wait	31	28	79	21	4	19	25	25	1	9	10	1[illegible]
Aspirations lower	26	24	119	32	4	19	33	33	5	45	14	1[illegible]
Not so committed	21	19	34	9	1	5	9	9	0	0	7	10
N =	110	100	370	100	21	100	100	100	11	100	73	10[illegible]

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6, A2 and I3)

Appendix 7.3: Family Impact on Career Commitment by Years in Work since First Break

Impact of Family on Career Commitment	Years in work since 1st break										Total Sample	
	Under 1 year		1 year		2 to 4 years		5 to 10 years		Over 10 years			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
More ambitious	9	5	4	3	18	7	15	12	10	16	56	7
Just as committed	48	26	53	35	79	32	50	40	23	38	253	33
Career will wait	46	25	29	19	57	23	15	12	8	13	155	20
Aspirations lower	55	29	52	35	67	27	36	29	15	25	225	29
Not so committed	29	16	12	8	23	9	10	8	5	8	79	10
N =	187	100	150	100	244	100	126	100	61	100	768	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions A6, A2 and 13)

Appendix 7.4: Need for Mobility by Level

	% Rating 'Very Significant' or 'Significant'			
	Professionals	All Managers	Senior Managers	Total Sample
Geographical mobility is important to career progress	26	43	48	37
Career progress will be impeded by need for mobility	22	33	36	29
N =	241	500	53	741

Source: IMS Survey 1991, (Questions E4 and J2)

Appendix 7.5: Attitudes to Combining Work and Family

	I strongly agree (1) %	I agree (2) %	I neither agree nor disagree (3) %	I disagree (4) %	I strongly disagree (5) %	Mean Value	N
Part-time work is incompatible with working as a manager	19	27	15	31	8	2.84	777
Part-time work is incompatible with working as a professional	6	12	13	44	25	3.68	783
Working from home is not practical in my kind of work	25	35	8	23	8	2.55	782
People think I'm not committed because I leave work promptly	14	39	21	21	5	2.63	778
I take less work home now than before I had children	15	28	24	24	9	2.83	774
I find combining work with family life stressful	22	45	14	16	3	2.33	782
My work performance is looked at more critically now	8	24	27	36	5	3.06	782
People expect me to be less career oriented	15	46	16	20	2	2.48	782
Motherhood does not affect my potential in my employer's eyes	4	29	21	36	10	3.19	781
As a working mother I feel isolated in my job	3	12	19	52	14	3.62	782
My manager supports me in my career choices	9	42	35	11	3	2.57	776
I feel I shouldn't mention domestic problems at work	9	34	18	35	4	2.90	781
Attitudes to working mothers are changing for the better	7	56	19	17	1	2.50	784
My employer is committed to developing female employees	7	39	30	19	4	2.74	781
I have had equal access to training and development	17	56	12	12	3	2.28	781
I feel less committed to my career since I had children	6	27	16	39	12	3.24	781

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question J1)

Appendix 7.6: Attitudes to Combining Work and Family by Employment Status and by Level

	Mean Values of Agreement *					
	Employment Status			Level		
	Part-time	Was Part-time	Full-time	Professional	All Managers	Senior Managers
Part-time work is incompatible with working as a manager	3.4	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.8
Part-time work is incompatible with working as a professional	4.2	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.6	3.8
Working from home is not practical in my kind of work	2.7	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.5	2.4
People think I'm not committed because I leave work promptly	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.9
I take less work home now than before I had children	2.6	3.2	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.1
I find combining work with family life stressful	2.5	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5
My work performance is looked at more critically now	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.1	3.2
People expect me to be less career oriented	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.3	2.6	3.0
Motherhood does not affect my potential in my employers eyes	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.1	2.8
As a working mother I feel isolated in my job	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.8	3.9
My manager supports me in my career choices	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.1
I feel I shouldn't mention domestic problems at work	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	2.8	2.9
Attitudes to working mothers are changing for the better	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4
My employer is committed to developing female employees	2.8	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.5
I have had equal access to training and development	2.5	2.2	2.2	2.6	2.1	1.6
I feel less committed to my career since I had children	2.9	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.4	3.9
N =	222	127	411	241	504	54

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Questions E1, G2, E4 and J1)

* 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree

Appendix 7.7: Advice given to other women

(Analysis of Multiple Responses)

Advice	Number	%
Good childcare	387	54
Partners co-operation	193	27
Flexible arrangements at work	164	23
Delegate if possible	147	20
Get organised	100	14
Balanced attitude work/home	96	13
Realistic standards	67	9
Don't feel guilty	66	9
Establish priorities	61	8
Expect different attitudes now	49	7
Stand up for self	43	6
Keep options open	38	5
Know your rights	32	4
Talk about problems	29	4
Consider financial implications	24	3
Get training before break	20	3
Family first	19	3
Show greater commitment	18	2
Maintain contact in break	16	2
Don't worry about confidence	16	2
Don't expect favours	15	2
Go ahead/try it	14	2
Accept career on hold	13	2
Take maximum leave possible	7	1
Full not part-time	6	1
Wait until kids at school	5	1
Have a social life	5	1
Don't compare male career progression	4	1
Emps help childcare	2	0
Kids before career	2	0
Join network/support group	2	0
Have no leisure	2	0
Certain want to return	2	0
Can combine both	2	0
Don't talk about problems	1	0
Don't do it!	1	0
Back to work asap	1	0
Know non-working Mums	1	0
N =	721	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question J3)

Appendix 7.8: Advice given to employers

(Analysis of Multiple Responses)

Advice	Number	%
Be flexible/understanding	413	58
More part-time/job-sharing	240	33
Creche/nursery at work	202	28
Judge by performance	127	18
Treat as equal	124	17
Financial help childcare	106	15
Update/ease back	69	10
Allow work at home	61	8
Part-time not 2nd best	54	8
Offer counselling	51	7
Examine prejudices	47	7
Encourage training	41	6
Use new skills	39	5
No late working	38	5
Contact during work break	36	5
Accommodate holidays	26	4
Longer breaks	25	3
Don't assume out of hours training	21	3
Fathers similar flexibility	18	3
Don't expect career aspirations	15	2
Informed line managers	14	2
Advice on career prospects	11	2
Improve maternity benefits	9	1
Support tax relief	4	1
After school activities	1	0
N =	718	100

Source: IMS Survey, 1991 (Question J4)

Appendix 7.9: General Comments on Career Development

Part-time work hinders promotion/development	45
Career halted/not there/hindered	35
More flexible working needed/solution to problems	31
Career review/assessment/counselling needed when return	21
Direct manager very important in managing career and family	16
Family is a constraint	12
Employer attitudes must change/discrimination	17
Rehabilitation period needed/easing back in/updating	13
Retraining scheme needed	14
Training with baby difficult/especially residential	13
Both need to keep in touch during break	13
Be committed/need to prove can do job	15
Career is what you make it/don't set limits	15
Ambition greater now	5
Promoted since break/while pregnant	10
Fathers should have equal opportunities to care for children	7
No female role models	6
School children biggest problem not babies	5
Women have to return to retain career/job	3
Treat women as individuals	3
Mothers discriminated against	4
Employer has equal opportunities/supportive	3
Working mothers should view themselves positively	3
Little job satisfaction resulting in little career development	3
2 year employment rule for SMP hinders changing employer	4
Employers need to be convinced of benefits to them	3
Employers realise family come first/not committed	3
Possible to work part-time as a manager	4
Part-time managers needed	2
Not possible to be part-time manager	1
Support of top management needed	3
Increased awareness of needs of working mothers seen	2
Promoted recently, delaying another child	2
Promoted while part-time	2
Employers don't help - have to find own solutions	1

Don't give up	1
Hard work but worth the effort	1
Working woman's view not considered	1
Maternity leave too short, stress in early months	2
Maintain a professional approach	1
3 years unpaid leave ideal	1
Dropped grade to get local job	3
Accepted part-time job, same duties, lower grade	1
Long break - had to drop grade	1
Took less powerful job/turned down promotion because of children	2
Re-trained while on break	1
Can't work unpaid hours, may be chosen for redundancy	1
Inability to work extra hours will hamper career	1
Full-time workload, part-time hours	2
Extra hours should not be expected	1
'Fast Track' for returners needed	1
Career Bridge scheme - good idea	1

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